THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™

HAUNTED HORROR™

Mr. KARSWELL

#23

MR. KARSWELL

HAIL FIENDS AND WELCOME BACK! CONTAINED HERE IS QUITE THE COLLECTION OF ***GRUESOME GOINGS-ON,*** SO SWARM AROUND THESE PAGES CAUTIOUSLY AS WE TEAR INTO ***UNNERVING TALES*** OF ***MONSTERS*** AND ***MUMMIES, SCIENCE,*** AND THE ***SICKENING SUPERNATURAL!*** YOU'LL EVEN DISCOVER THAT OUR SENSE OF HUMOR IS JUST AS ***APPALLING*** AS EVER! IT'S ***HORRIBLE!*** IT'S ***HIDEOUS!*** IT'S ***HIDEOUSLY HORRIBLE!***
IT'S ***HAUNTED HORROR!***
AIEEEEEE!!!

Art by
Art Fuentes

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On the cover, *Out of The Shadows #7*, January 1953. Artist: Jack Katz. Standard.

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OUT OF THE BEYOND, WITH SILENT, GHOSTLY STEPS, COMES A MACABRE PROCESSION OF CREATURES SO GRUESOME THEY COULD STRIKE FEAR IN THE DEVIL! THEY GATHER AROUND CARL BASCOM, THE FAMOUS WRITER OF HORROR STORIES, AND WATCH WITH GRIM SATISFACTION AS HIS TWISTED IMAGINATION GIVES BIRTH TO MORE OF THEIR GRISLY KIND! CARL BASCOM IS THEIR CREATOR! CARL BASCOM IS . . .

the MONSTER MAKER

SO THAT STUPID PUBLISHER OF MINE THINKS I'M THROUGH AS A HORROR STORY WRITER BECAUSE MY MONSTERS DON'T SEEM REAL ENOUGH, HUH? WELL, I'LL SHOW HIM! I'LL CREATE HORROR CHARACTERS THAT HE'LL NEVER FORGET! CHARACTERS THAT'LL MAKE FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER LOOK LIKE SLEEPING BEAUTY!

FAR INTO THE NIGHT, CARL BANGS AWAY ON HIS TYPEWRITER...AND EVERY PAGE IS A BIRTHPLACE OF A MONSTER...

BUT BLAST IT ALL, IT'S STILL NO GOOD! I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH IT! THIS IS HACK STUFF... I CAN'T GO ON POUNDING OUT THIS TRASH!

I'LL TOSS THE WHOLE MESS INTO THE FIRE AND...

NO! STOP! YOU MUSTN'T DO THAT! IT WOULD BE MURDER!

Baffling Mysteries #19, January 1954. Art: Jim McLaughlin. Publisher: Ace Magazines.

HUH? HOLY SMOKES! I-I MUST BE SEEIN' THINGS! THIS — THIS CAN'T BE REAL!

I'M AS REAL AS YOU'VE MADE ME ON PAGE SEVEN OF THAT SCRIPT YOU WANT TO BURN!

AND LOOK...THERE ARE ALL THE OTHERS YOU'VE CREATED ON YOUR PAGES!

CRIPES! THOSE ARE ALL OF MY HORROR STORY CHARACTERS!

YES, CARL...SPAWNED OF YOUR IMAGINATION! WE ARE YOUR BRAIN CHILDREN! WE EXIST BECAUSE YOU CREATED US! AND IF YOU DESTROY THOSE PAGES...YOU DESTROY US, TOO!

EITHER I'M GOIN' BATTY OR I'VE HIT PERFECTION IN MY WRITING... I'VE LEARNED HOW TO CREATE REAL CHARACTERS!

I'LL FIND OUT IF THIS IS FACT OR FICTION BY TOSSING ONE OF THESE PAGES OF MY SCRIPT INTO THE FIRE!

NO! DON'T DO THAT!

FIRE SNATCHES AT THE SHEET OF PAPER...AND IT BURSTS INTO FLAME...

AND AT THE SAME TIME ONE OF THE CREATURES IS SUDDENLY ENVELOPED IN FIRE...

HIS BLOOD-BOILING SCREAMS STAB THRU THE ROOM AS HE BURNS LIKE A TORCH...

AND A FEW MINUTES LATER, ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE MONSTER...IS A MOUND OF ASHES...

YOU MURDERED HIM!

I WARNED YOU THAT WOULD HAPPEN... AND YOU DELIBERATELY KILLED HIM! YOU'RE A MURDERER, CARL BASCOM!

BUT I—I THOUGHT THIS WAS JUST A DREAM ... A NIGHTMARE!

SEIZE HIM BEFORE HE DESTROYS MORE OF US!

NO, I—I WON'T! I PROMISE! HERE, YOU CAN HAVE THE REST OF THE SCRIPT!

IT ISN'T SAFE TO LEAVE YOU NOW THAT YOU'VE ATTAINED THE SKILL TO CREATE LIVING CHARACTERS IN YOUR WRITING. YOU MUST COME WITH US... TO THE WORLD BEYOND!

NO! NO! DON'T TAKE ME AWAY... PLEASE DON'T!

CARL'S PLEAS DIE AWAY AS THE ROOM SUDDENLY FILLS WITH A MYSTERIOUS GREEN MIST... AND THE SMELL OF DEATH! THE MACABRE POPULATION DISSOLVES IN THE PUTRID SMOG AND CARL FEELS HIMSELF FALLING THRU A VORTEX LINED WITH A MOSAIC OF HORRENDOUS FACES . . .

IS IT MINUTES...OR HOURS...OR A THOUSAND YEARS LATER WHEN CARL OPENS HIS EYES AGAIN? TERROR AND FEAR PARALYZE HIS VOICE AND BODY...ONLY HIS THOUGHTS FUNCTION...BUT HE WONDERS IF HE'S SANE AS HE STARES AT THE SIGHT BEFORE HIM...

IT CAN'T BE TRUE...THEY DON'T EXIST! THIS PLACE DOESN'T EXIST! GO AWAY, YOU BLASTED GHOULS! GO AWAY BEFORE I GO MAD!

FACING CARL IS A FANTASTIC CONGRESS OF HORROR! EVERY GROTESQUE MONSTROSITY THAT EVER STALKED THROUGH THE PAGES OF LITERATURE STARES AT THE MAN WHO DARED TO MURDER ONE OF THEIR WEIRD KIND! CARL MAKES A MENTAL ROLL-CALL OF THE FIENDS HE RECOGNIZES! THERE'S QUASIMODO, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME... AND DRACULA... AND FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER... AND CYCLOPS... AND KING KONG... AND MEDUSA... AND DR. JEKYLL AND MR HYDE... AND MANY, MANY MORE . . .

TAKE HIM TO THE DUNGEON WHERE THE OTHER OFFENDER WAITS! AFTER THE FUNERAL OF THE ONE HE MURDERED WE SHALL GIVE THEM BOTH A TRIAL!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! YOU MONSTROSITIES DON'T EXIST!

YOU'RE ONLY HORROR STORY CHARACTERS! YOU'RE FICTION ... YOU'RE NOT REAL!

WE WERE BORN IN THE MINDS OF GREAT MEN...AND WE EXIST NOW AND WE SHALL EXIST WHEN YOU LIE ROTTING IN YOUR GRAVE! THE GREAT WRITERS WHO CREATED US PRESERVED US FOR ALL ETERNITY BY PRESERVING THEIR ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

YOU TOO COULD HAVE BEEN GREAT, CARL BASCOM... BUT YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THE CHARACTERS YOU CREATED! YOU EVEN MURDERED ONE OF THEM ... AND YOU SHALL PAY THE PENALTY! TAKE HIM AWAY!

IN HERE, MURDERER.. WITH GLORIA STONE... ANOTHER OF YOUR KIND!

YOU BLASTED FRIGHTS WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS! I'LL GET YOU...ALL OF YOU!

IT'S USELESS TO FIGHT THEM! I FOUND THAT OUT AFTER I TORE UP A PAGE OF A HORROR SCRIPT I WROTE... AND MURDERED THE MONSTER I CREATED ON THAT PAGE!

I HAVE AN IDEA TO ESCAPE THIS HELL! HAVE YOU GOT A PENCIL?

AFTER GLORIA HANDS CARL A PENCIL, CARL TAKES OUT A NOTEBOOK HE ALWAYS CARRIES FOR IDEAS, AND BEGINS TO WRITE IN IT..

IF THAT'S A MESSAGE ASKING FOR HELP... HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET IT OUT OF HERE AND INTO OUR WORLD?

IT ISN'T A MESSAGE! IT'S A STORY... A HORROR STORY WITH CHARACTERS THAT LIVE!

AND AS CARL WRITES, THE GROTESQUE CHARACTERS HE CREATES, MATERIALIZE IN THE DUNGEON AND GATHER AROUND THEIR CREATOR...

YOU MUST BE INSANE TO CREATE MORE OF THESE FIENDS AFTER WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO US!

THERE...THE STORY IS FINISHED! AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, GLORIA... THESE LOATHSOME OFFSPRING OF MY IMAGINATION ARE GOING TO GET US OUT OF HERE ...OR DIE!

QUICKLY, CARL YANKS OUT A CIGARETTE LIGHTER AND HIS THUMB SPARKS A FLAME! THEN HE HOLDS THE NOTEBOOK, ON WHICH THE STORY IS WRITTEN, OVER THE FIRE AND YELLS...

YOU'LL ALL DIE IF I SET FIRE TO THIS STORY IN WHICH YOU WERE BORN! TELL MONSTER MASTER OF THIS HORROR HOLE TO RELEASE US... OR YOU'LL ALL BURN!

NO! DON'T KILL US! PLEASE! WE'LL DO ANYTHING YOU ASK! WE WILL TELL HIM TO SET YOU FREE!

AND.

ALL RIGHT, CARL BASCOM... YOU WIN! WE PROMISE TO SEND YOU BACK TO YOUR OWN HOMES IN THE UPPER WORLD! AND YOU MUST PROMISE NEVER TO DESTROY ANOTHER ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

YEAH...YEAH... WE PROMISE! NOW GET US OUT OF HERE . . . AND HURRY!

THE MONSTER MASTER SUMMONS A SWIRLING GREEN TORNADO FROM THE DEEPEST PIT OF HADES... AND IT SNATCHES CARL AND GLORIA AND SPINS THEM UPWARD THRU THE SAME HORROR-PAVED FUNNEL...

MEMORIES AND A SICKENING STENCH ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT TO REMIND CARL OF HIS FEARFUL JOURNEY INTO THE MONSTER WORLD WHEN HE COMES TO IN HIS ROOM..

WAS IT A NIGHTMARE? OR—OR DID IT ACTUALLY HAPPEN? I—I DON'T KNOW ... BUT I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY CHANCES!

I'LL DESTROY EVERY ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT I OWN! THAT'LL KILL EVERY MONSTER I EVER CREATED... THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN COME AFTER ME! I'LL BURN 'EM ... I'LL RIP 'EM TO PIECES...

AND DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF ETERNITY, THE MONSTROUS CHILDREN OF CARL BASCOM'S IMAGINATION SQUIRM AND SCREAM IN ANGUISH AS CARL BEGINS HIS MASS MURDER OF THE MONSTERS...

FOR EVERY PAGE CARL BASCOM BURNS . . . A MONSTER ALSO BURNS . . .

FOR EVERY PAGE HE CRUSHES... A MONSTER IS ALSO CRUSHED...

FOR EVERY PAGE HE TEARS INTO PIECES . . . A MONSTER IS ALSO TORN TO PIECES . . .

I DID IT! I'VE DESTROYED THEM ALL! THEY'LL NEVER GET ME NOW . . . NEVER! HA! HA! HA!

AND I'LL WRITE A HORROR NOVEL ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES IN THE MONSTER WORLD! IT'LL BE A BEST SELLER! NOTHING LIKE IT HAS EVER BEEN DONE BEFORE!

I'LL DESTROY THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT PAGES AS SOON AS I TYPE THEM AND KEEP A CARBON COPY. THAT WAY I'LL GET RID OF THE MONSTERS AS SOON AS I CREATE THEM!

CARL WORKS DAY AND NIGHT ON HIS NOVEL! HE RELIVES EVERY TORTUROUS EMOTION... AND HE SCREAMS WITH DELIGHT AS HE THROWS EACH FINISHED PAGE OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT INTO THE FIRE AND CREMATES EVERY MONSTER HE CREATES...

BURN YOU BLASTED DEMONS! BURN! HA! HA!

AFTER A MONTH OF BURNING AND DESTROYING, CARL FEEDS THE LAST PAGE OF HIS ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT TO THE FLAMES... AND ALSO THE LAST MONSTER...

AND NOW TO TAKE THIS CARBON COPY MANUSCRIPT TO MY PUBLISHER AND COLLECT A BIG, JUICY ADVANCE! HA! SOMEONE'S KNOCKING ON THE DOOR...IT MAY BE HIM LOOKING FOR ME!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

IT'S ME, CARL... GLORIA STONE. THE WRITER WHO WAS WITH YOU IN THE MONSTER WORLD!

YEAH, SO WHAT?

I CAME TO TELL YOU THE GOOD NEWS. I WROTE A NOVEL ABOUT THE MONSTER WORLD...AND A PUBLISHER BOUGHT IT. HERE'S THE MANUSCRIPT.

LET ME SEE IT!

BE CAREFUL, CARL ... THAT'S THE ORIGINAL AND THE ONLY COPY I HAVE.

BUT THIS IS ALMOST LIKE MY NOVEL. WE BOTH CAN'T SELL THE SAME STORY!

SO YOURS GOES INTO THE FIRE!

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKES, CARL ... STOP! DON'T DO THAT!

BUT GLORIA'S WARNING IS TOO LATE! THE MANUSCRIPT IS SWALLOWED UP BY THE FLAMES...AND AT THE SAME INSTANT...CARL EXPLODES INTO A HUMAN TORCH...

HEY! WHAT THE...? OWW-W-W-W! HELP! HELP!

CARL SCREAMS AND TWISTS WITH PAIN...BUT HE'S BEYOND ALL HELP! AND IN A SHORT TIME, CARL BASCOM IS ONLY A HEAP OF SMOULDERING ASHES...

THIS HORRIBLE THING WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF HE'D ONLY WAITED UNTIL I TOLD HIM THAT I MADE HIM THE REAL-LIFE HERO IN THAT MANUSCRIPT HE BURNED!

THE END

GHOST WITH A TORCH

ON A PLEASANT SPRING NIGHT IN A CEMETERY THAT SERVICED A WEALTHY SUBURBAN COMMUNITY, THE GHOST OF EMILY HARRIS ROSE SLOWLY FROM HER GRAVE. THE GHOST WAS CARRYING A TORCH...

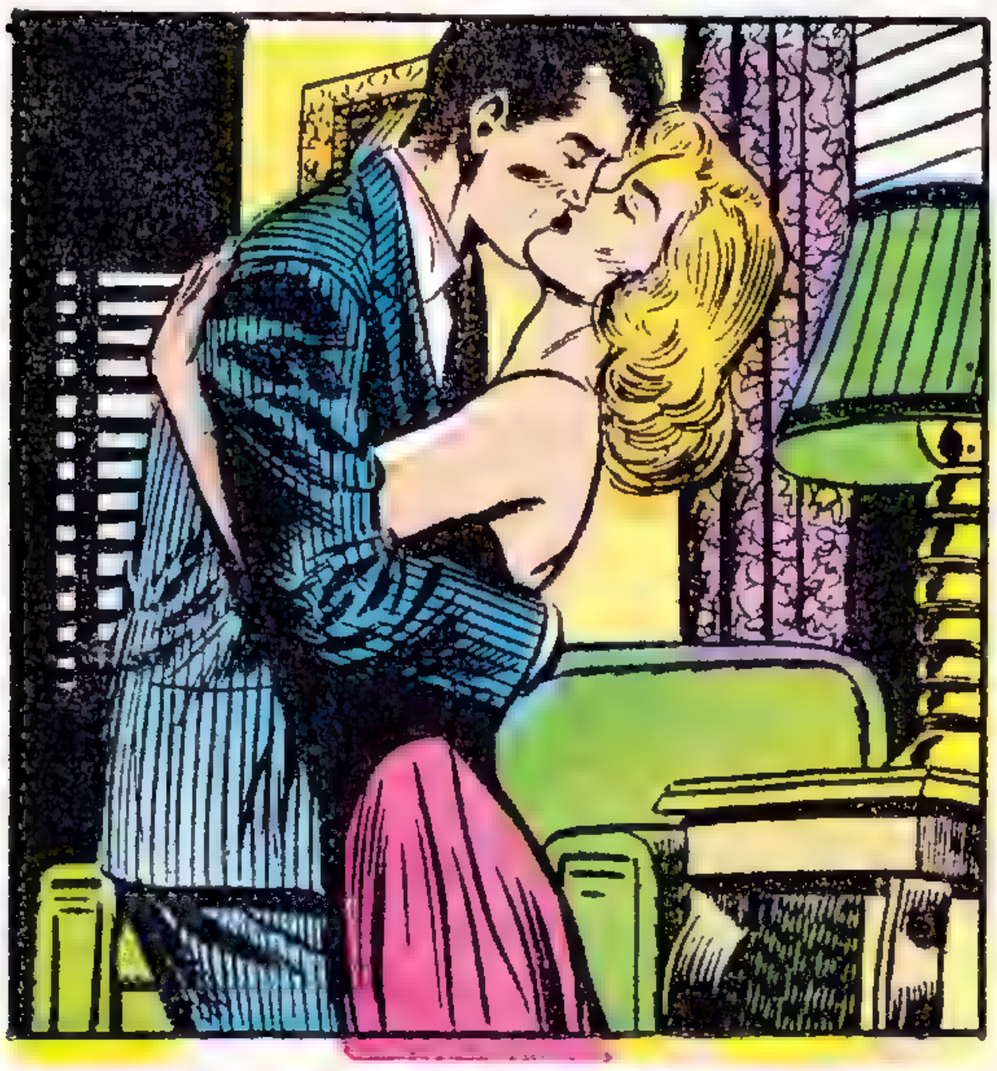
THE TORCH WAS FIGURATIVE. EMILY HAD DEEMED HERSELF SO CONSUMED WITH LOVE FOR HER HUSBAND, ALEC, WHO WAS STILL ALIVE THAT SHE HAD WRITHED CEASELESSLY IN HER GRAVE, CAUSING EARTH-TREMORS DISTURBING TO THE SENSE OF NON-BEING OF HER FELLOW-DEAD SO TOGETHER THEY GRANTED HER WISH—TO SEE ALEC ONCE MORE!

SHE GLIDED SOUNDLESSLY THROUGH THE MASSIVE DOOR OF THE MANSION SHE HAD ONCE BOUGHT FOR ALEC...

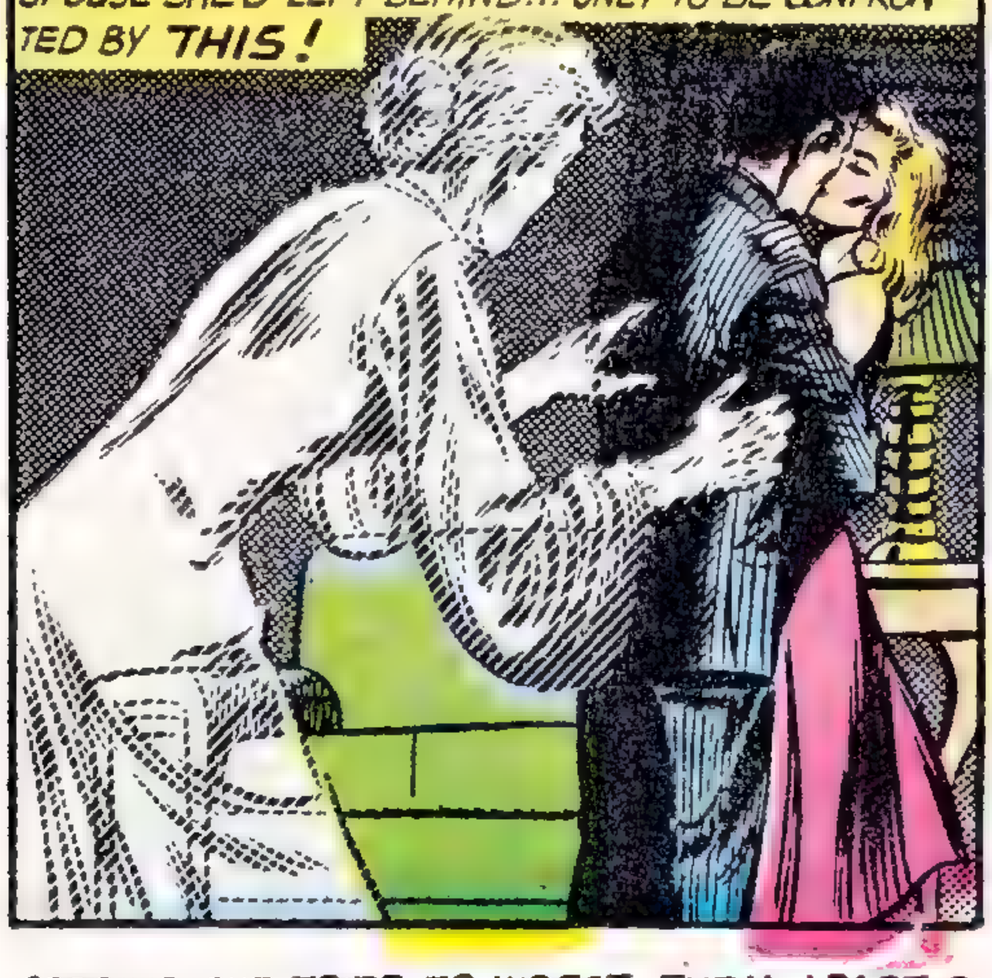
AND A MOMENT LATER, HER SPECTRAL FACE WAS WRITHING IN A SHOCKED GRIMACE!

Tales of Horror #13, October 1954. Art: Al Gordon. Publisher: Toby.

FOR THERE WAS ALEC, WEARING A SUIT SHE HAD ONCE BOUGHT HIM, KISSING A **BLONDE!**



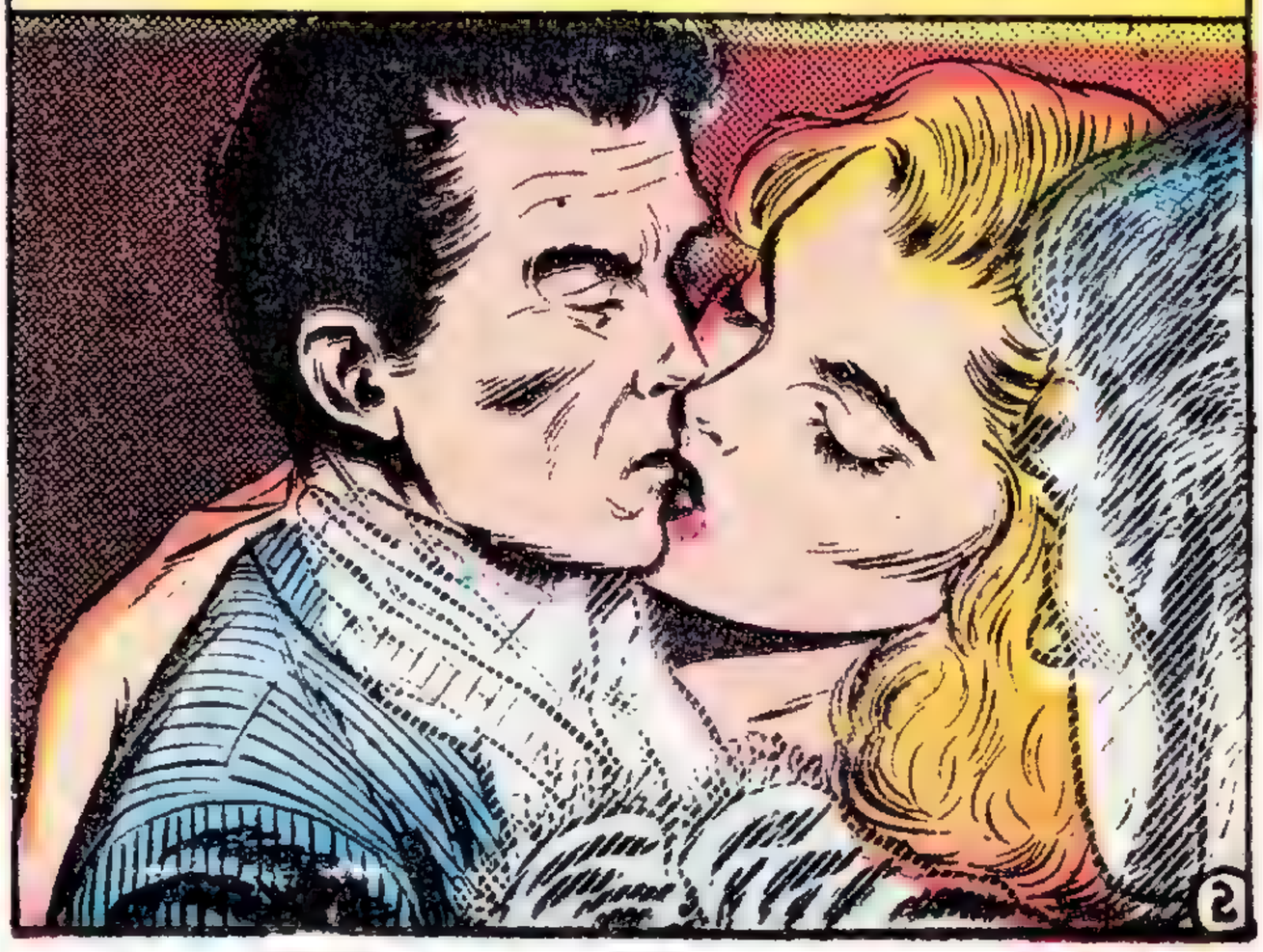
THE GHOST GLIDED MENACINGLY TOWARDS THE COUPLE. ONLY FOUR MONTHS DEAD; RETURNED MIRACULOUSLY FOR A LAST LOVING GLANCE AT THE SPOUSE SHE'D LEFT BEHIND... ONLY TO BE CONFRONTED BY **THIS!**



SOBBING, SHE TRIED TO WREST THEM APART. BUT HER SOBS WERE SOUNDLESS. AND THOUGH SHE CLAWED WITH NAILS THAT HAD THE SHAPE OF SHARPNESS...

FOR **BLONDES** HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE WEAKNESS OF THIS MAN WHO HAD MARRIED HER FOR HER MONEY! EVEN WHEN SHE'D BEEN ALIVE, HOW MANY THOUSANDS OF HER HARD-INHERITED DOLLARS HE'D SPENT ON SIMPERING, VACUOUS **BLONDES!**

AND THOUGH SHE SQUEEZED WITH ALL HER SPECTRAL MIGHT ON ALEC'S WINDPIPE... ALEC FELT NOTHING BUT THE WARM PRESSURE OF HIS BLONDE'S LIPS!



WHEN ALIVE, SHE'D HAD WEAPONS. SHE HAD DENIED ALEC HIS ALLOWANCE, HUMILIATED HIM BEFORE THE SERVANTS, EVEN RAKED HIM WITH HER NAILS. BUT NOW GRIEVOUSLY AFFRONTED BY HIS FAITHLESSNESS, SHE WAS DENIED MEANS TO STRIKE BACK!

SUDDENLY SHE GASPED. FOR SHE SAW THE BLONDE, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE EMBRACE, REACHING BEHIND HER...

TO THE TABLE WHERE A SHARP KNIFE LAY.

ALEC, AS ALWAYS, WAS KISSING WITH HIS EYES CLOSED. HE HAD NO AWARENESS OF THE POISED KNIFE...

BUT **SHE** SAW—AND A SUDDEN VIOLENT CONVULSION TOLD HER THAT HER FELLOW-DEAD, STILL CONCERNED FOR THEIR PEACE HAD **EMPOWERED HER TO WARN ALEC!**

BUT WHY SHOULD SHE WARN HIM? WHY SHOULD SHE LET HIM LIVE—WHEN ALIVE HE WAS **BEYOND** HER!

SO AS THE KNIFE SLASHED DOWNWARDS, SHE SMILED FROM THE SHADOWS.

AARRGH!

DIE, ALEC! NOW YOU'LL BE **MINE** FOREVER!

NOW ALEC LAY CRUMPLED ON THE FLOOR, THE BLONDE WAS RIFLING THE SAFE, AND THE GHOST OF EMILY WAS WAITING WITH SHREWD PATIENCE FOR WHAT SHE KNEW WOULD HAPPEN NEXT...

EMILY!

GIVE ME YOUR HAND!

HE DAZEDLY LET HER LEAD HIM THROUGH THE WALL AND INTO THE SKY.

WE'LL BE TOGETHER, NOW, ALEC! WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!

SHE COULD HAVE TAKEN HIM TO SOME LONELY BLACK-AS-NIGHT CORNER OF THE GALAXY WHERE THE TWO OF THEM WOULD HAVE SAT SILENTLY TOGETHER FOR ALL ETERNITY LIKE TWO BATS IN A CAVE. BUT WHY HAVE A HANDSOME YOUNG SPOUSE IF YOU CAN'T SHOW HIM OFF...?

THIS IS MY ALEC! THIS IS MY ALEC!

AND THEN IT HAPPENED! ALEC'S EYES WERE SUDDENLY NO LONGER DAZED! THEY SPARKLED SPECTRALLY.

NO, ALEC, PLEASE... YOU CAN'T! NO!

WHY NOT,? YOU DON'T LOVE ME! IF YOU DID, YOU'D HAVE WARNED ME BEFORE I WAS STABBED! NOW I DON'T NEED YOUR MONEY— SO I'LL NEVER COME CRAWLING BACK!

ALEC HAD FOUND HIMSELF A SIMPERING DIMWITTED VACUOUS-FACED BUT FOR ALL THAT, VERY AGREEABLE BLONDE GHOST!

SO ON THAT PLEASANT SPRING NIGHT, THE GHOST OF EMILY HARRIS, ALONE AND SOBBING, SANK SLOWLY BACK INTO HER GRAVE IN THAT WEALTHY SUBURBAN COMMUNITY CEMETERY.

WHAT CAN MAN DARE TO BELIEVE? WHAT FEARFUL TRUTHS LIE BEYOND THE REALM OF MAN'S DARKEST FANTASY? SUCH IS THE STRANGE AND STARTLING STORY OF ONE IT IS BEST SIMPLY TO CALL ---- ?

SILENT NIGHT THAT CLOAKS ALL IN ITS SHROUD OF MYSTERY! NIGHT, WHEN COMES FORTH ALL THINGS THAT SLIDE AND CRAWL, ALL THINGS FORBIDDEN TO THE CLEAN EYES OF DAY! EVEN THE LONE LIGHT OF THE POLICE STATION WAS A SOLITARY GREEN EYE, WATCHING, WAITING!

BUT INSIDE THE STATION-HOUSE, THE SOBS OF THE GIRL VIED WITH THE BRIGHT GLARE OF UNSHADED LIGHT BULBS! THE WHITE-COATED AMBULANCE DOCTOR WATCHED HER BESIDE THE BURLY POLICE OFFICER.

THE BROMIDE'S BEGINNING TO TAKE EFFECT. HER HYSTERICS ARE OVER, ANYWAY.

OH, PAUL -- (SOB) --- PAUL -- (SOB)!

Worlds of Fear #8, January 1953. Art: Sheldon Moldoff. Publisher: Fawcett.

AT LEAST WE'VE FOUND OUT WHO SHE IS---PAPERS IN HER PURSE. MONA HARRIS. SHE WAS ENGAGED TO PAUL FOWLER!

PAUL FOWLER? THAT YOUNG SCIENTIST LOST WITH THE REST OF THE REED EXPEDITION A FEW MONTHS AGO...? AN AIR CRASH IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLES, WASN'T IT?

THAT'S RIGHT, DOC. IT WAS IN PAUL FOWLER'S ROOM WE FOUND HER, SCREAMING HER HEAD OFF----ALL ALONE, YELLING LIKE A MADWOMAN! THE LANDLADY CALLED US!

LOOK---SHE'S COME AROUND. MAYBE I CAN GET HER STORY NOW WHILE THE SEDATIVE LASTS!

HELLO, MONA--FEEL BETTER? YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW. THIS IS THE POLICE STATION.

THE--THE POLICE STATION?

YES, YOUNG LADY. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? CAN YOU TELL US?

Y-YES---I REMEMBER NOW--- I REMEMBER! IT--IT BEGAN WHEN I PASSED PAUL'S APARTMENT-- TONIGHT.

EVER SINCE THEY-- (CHOKE)--- FOUND THE CHARRED WRECKAGE OF THE EXPEDITION PLANE, I'VE WALKED PAST THE HOUSE WHERE PAUL HAD HIS APARTMENT. TONIGHT THERE WAS A LIGHT THERE. SOMEHOW, I **HAD** TO GO UP THERE!

WHY? AFTER TWO MONTHS, WASN'T IT LIKELY THAT THE LANDLADY HAD RENTED THE APARTMENT TO SOMEONE ELSE?

NO, PAUL HAD PAID RENT FOR THREE MONTHS, THE TIME THE EXPEDITION WAS TO BE AWAY. HE LEFT ORDERS NOT TO RENT OR MOVE OUT HIS THINGS TILL THE TIME WAS UP--- NO MATTER WHAT!

AND MRS. ROGAN WOULD'VE KEPT TO THEIR AGREEMENT DESPITE THE NEWS OF THE CRASH. I KNOW HER. SO WHEN I SAW THE LIGHT, IT DREW ME LIKE A MAGNET. I WENT UP THE STAIRS TO PAUL'S DOOR...I REMEMBER IT ALL...

"THE DOOR WAS LOCKED, BUT I HEARD SOMEONE SHUFFLING ABOUT INSIDE.

I POUNDED ON THE DOOR, MY WORDS SOUNDING SO RIDICULOUS AFTER WHAT I KNEW OF THE CRASH, AND YET--

PAUL--PAUL IS THAT YOU, PAUL? ANSWER ME..? WHO'S IN THERE?

"THROUGH THE CRACK BENEATH THE DOOR, I SAW THE LIGHT GO OUT IN THE ROOM. I POUNDED AGAIN, HARDER, MY THROAT STRANGELY DRY AND STRAINED!

PLEASE!..WHO'S IN THERE? PAUL IS-- (CHOKE)---IS IT YOU? PLEASE ANSWER ME!

"THERE WAS NO ANSWER, BUT SOMETHING TOLD ME TO STAY! I KEPT CALLING AND POUNDING TILL FINALLY A VOICE DID ANSWER---PAUL'S VOICE! MY LEGS WERE WEAK WITH SHOCK!

MONA--GO AWAY! GO AWAY! IMMEDIATELY!

OH, PAUL--PAUL! YOU---YOU'RE ALIVE---YOU'RE BACK!

PAUL! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? OH, MY DARLING---OPEN THE DOOR! LET ME SEE YOU!

NO! GO AWAY, MONA! I CAN'T MARRY YOU NOW. WE'RE ALL THROUGH --FINISHED!

FORGET YOU SPOKE TO ME, MONA. GO AWAY AND FORGET IT ALL!

I WON'T DO ANY SUCH THING, DARLING! OPEN THE DOOR AND TALK TO ME SENSIBLY, PAUL. PLEASE, MY DARLING--!

"PAUL'S VOICE SOUNDED THE SAME, YET DIFFERENT IN AN UNEXPLAINABLE WAY. I PLEADED WITH HIM, BEGGED HIM TO LET ME IN, KNOWING I COULD CHANGE WHATEVER HAD HAPPENED TO MAKE HIM FEEL THIS WAY. AT LAST THE DOOR OPENED AND--

OH, PAUL, MY DARLING--- WHERE ARE YOU? TURN ON THE LIGHTS, DARLING!

NO!..NO LIGHT SIT DOWN IN THE BIG CHAIR, MONA-- YOU'LL FIND IT STRAIGHT AHEAD OF YOU!

"I FOUND THE CHAIR IN THE PITCH BLACKNESS. A STRANGE ODOR, LIKE THAT OF A DANK AND DECAYING CAVE, FILLED THE ROOM. PAUL'S VOICE CAME TO ME FROM ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM, BUT I COULDN'T SEE A THING IN THE TOTAL DARKNESS.

I--I'VE CHANGED, MONA! I'M NOT THE MAN YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH. I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH OUR MARRIAGE!

PAUL, DARLING--- STOP THAT SILLY TALK! I'M SO HAPPY THAT YOU'RE ALIVE-- THAT I--WELL, WE CAN WORK OUT WHATEVER'S MADE YOU THINK THIS WAY!

NO, MONA, NO! LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY! THEN LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AND FORGET ME, FORGET YOU EVER SPOKE TO ME!

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK AS I SAT BACK AND PAUL BEGAN HIS STORY. HE STARTED WITH THE CRASH OF THE PLANE IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLES. THE PLANE BURNED, BUT PAUL, DR. REED AND A BOTANIST, HADEKER, CRAWLED FREE.

THIS WAY, HADEKER ---THIS WAY!

THE REST--- ALL TRAPPED INSIDE! IT'S TERRIBLE!

JUST THE THREE OF US LEFT, DR. REED. SOMEHOW, WE WERE THROWN CLEAR!

ANY IDEA WHERE WE ARE, DR. REED?

I THINK I CAN PARTLY ANSWER THAT, PAUL THIS FOLIAGE IS OF THE RAREST TYPE. WE'RE IN THE UNEXPLORED REGIONS OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLE!

WELL, WE CAME HERE TO EXPLORE SO LET'S EXPLORE US SOME WATER AND SHELTER IF WE CAN!

"PAUL AND THE OTHER TWO SCIENTISTS BEGAN TO MAKE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE DENSE GROWTH. IT WAS NEAR NIGHTFALL WHEN COMPLETELY BY ACCIDENT THEY CAME UPON THE ENTRANCE TO A STRANGE UNDERGROUND CAVERN. DR. REED WAS INSTANTLY EXCITED.

GENTLEMEN, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING FIND! THESE ARE THE LOST CAVERNS OF THE ANCIENT INCA LEGEND.

YES, THE SYMBOLS--DEFINITELY INCA! THEN THE OLD LEGEND REALLY HAD SOME TRUTH TO IT! THE CAVERNS EXISTED!

AND STILL DO! REMEMBER, PAUL, THE OLD INCA SCROLLS WE FOUND IN PERU SPOKE OF THE LEGEND!

YES! THE LEGEND HAS IT THAT ONCE HUMAN LIFE DWELLED IN THESE CAVERNS, BUT DEGENERATED INTO A FORM OF ELEMENTARY PROTOPLASM SO VICIOUS AND HORRIBLE THAT NO ONE EVER CAME FROM THE CAVERNS ALIVE!

WELL, ALL LEGENDS HAVE SOME FORM OF TALL TALE ABOUT THEM. LET'S INVESTIGATE FURTHER, GENTLEMEN.

BY ALL MEANS! THIS IS A PRICELESS DISCOVERY!

"THEIR SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY AT FEVER PITCH, THE MEN WENT DEEP INTO THE CAVERNS, HONEYCOMBED WITH TUNNELS, MARVELING AT THEIR FIND. BUT FINALLY--

GENTLEMEN, I'M AFRAID WE'RE LOST! WE WERE CHILDISHLY FOOLISH NOT TO MARK OUR TRAIL! I--I WAS SO EXCITED I JUST FORGOT!

I GUESS THAT'S JUST WHAT HAPPENED TO US, DR. REED!

BUT THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT! LET'S GO ON---WE'LL FIND IT, I'M SURE!

YES, THERE'S AIR IN THESE TUNNELS. THAT MEANS THERE IS AN EXIT SOMEWHERE ABOUT!

"EXPLORING FURTHER IN THE UNDERGROUND CATACOMBS, THE SCIENTISTS DETECTED A STRANGE ODOR, AN ODOR IMPOSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY, THAT MINGLED WITH THE DANK AND MUSKY SCENT OF THE CAVERNS. AND FINALLY, STILL HOPELESSLY LOST, THEY HALTED AS---

IT'LL SAVE TIME IF YOU TWO INVESTIGATE THAT TUNNEL AND I'LL LOOK INTO THIS ONE. LET'S SAY TEN MINUTES OF EXPLORING, AND THEN WE RETURN HERE TO REPORT.

GOOD IDEA, HADEKER. SEE YOU BACK HERE IN TEN MINUTES.

COME ON, PAUL. LET'S SEE IF THIS ONE LEADS US ANYPLACE WORTH GOING!

"BUT PAUL AND DR. REED HADN'T GONE FAR WHEN THEY HEARD HADEKER'S VOICE SCREAMING IN TERROR AND PAIN, EAR-SPLITTING, BLOOD-CHILLING SCREAMS.

EEEEEE!!!!

WHAT IN HEAVENS--???

EEEIIII!

THEY'RE EAT---- EATING ME---

EEEIIIAA

COME ON!

"BUT THE SOUL-TWISTING SCREAMS STOPPED AS SUDDENLY AS THEY'D BEGUN, AND WHEN PAUL AND DR. REED REACHED THE OTHER TUNNEL--

THERE--THERE'S NO SIGN OF HADEKER!

NONE EXCEPT, **THESE!** LOOK HERE--BITS OF BONE AND FLESH. AND A SCRAP OF HIS SHIRT!

GOOD HEAVENS! HE--HE WAS **EATEN!** ...EATEN **ALIVE!**

BUT HOW?... AND WHAT...?

PROBABLY ANTS OF SOME KIND, PAUL! THE VICIOUS RED ANTS OF AFRICA CAN DEVOUR ANY ANIMAL IN MINUTES. THESE ARE PROBABLY LARGER AND WORSE.

POOR HADEKER!

COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

"BUT THE TWO MEN FOUND NO EXIT AND AT LAST HALTED BESIDE A SUBTERRANEAN RIVER FLOWING THROUGH THE CAVERNS.

THE SAME STRANGE ODOR OF DECAY ASSAILED THEIR NOSTRILS BUT WEARINESS LAY HEAVILY UPON THEM!

WE CAN FOLLOW THIS RIVER, PAUL. IT MUST LEAD US OUT. BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO REST A WHILE. I'M TOO TIRED TO GO ON NOW.

YES, DR. REED. WE MUST CONSERVE OUR STRENGTH TILL WE'RE OUT OF HERE!

"PAUL QUICKLY FELL INTO EXHAUSTED SLEEP AS DID DR. REED. HE SLEPT HEAVILY TILL THE SCREAMS PIERCED INTO HIS SUBCONSCIOUS TO WAKEN HIM IN SHAKING TERROR. DR. REED WAS GONE FROM BESIDE HIM AND ---

AAAIIII! AAA!!!

GOOD LORD! DR. REED'S VOICE! HE MUST'VE GONE OFF TO LOOK ABOUT FURTHER!

NO--NO-

AAAAGH!

I'M COMING, DOCTOR-- I'M COMING!

"BUT SUDDENLY THERE WAS ONLY SILENCE AND PAUL HALTED BEFORE THE SOLE REMAINS OF DR. REED--A FRAGMENT OF HUMAN BONE, STILL WARM TO THE TOUCH! PAUL'S HANDS SHOOK AND HIS BLOOD CONGEALED WITH A FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN!

I--I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

GOT--GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE---! YES---OUT OF HERE!

"THEN SUDDENLY THAT STRANGE ODOR OF DECAY GREW ALMOST OVERPOWERING, AND UPON THE WALLS OF THE CAVERN HE SAW THE SHADOWY FORMS. HE WHIRLED AND NOW HIS OWN SCREAMS ECHOED IN HORROR!

NO!.. NO!.. NO! AAAAGH!

ooOoOoAAH..., THEY'RE EATING ME---EATING ME-- AAAAGH! NO...AAIII!

PLEASE--- AAAAIIII.... AAAAAH!

"PAUL LAPSED INTO SEMI-CONSCIOUSNESS, HEARING AND FEELING ONLY IN THAT VAGUE HALF-WORLD BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, AS, EVER SO FAINTLY, HIS PAIN-WRACKED BODY HEARD THE VOICE!

NO!..LET HIM ALONE! THIS ONE'S YOUNG! I WANT HIM--HE'S MINE!

"HELPLESS, PAUL FELT HIMSELF BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED AWAY AS HE LAPSED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS! IT WAS LATER---MUCH LATER---WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES AS AN UNWORLDLY KIND OF SOUND ROSE AND FELL IN THE AIR IN A STRANGE CADENCE HE FINALLY RECOGNIZED FOR WHAT IT WAS.

I--I'M ALIVE! AND THAT SOUND----I'M BEING SUNG TO!

AND THE--THE BITES! ...THEY'RE COVERED WITH HUGE LEAVES--A KIND OF BANDAGE!

"THE SLIGHT EFFORT SPENT HIS WEAK BODY AND PAUL FELL BACK UPON THE PRIMITIVE BEDDING. THE CREATURE BESIDE HIM LEANED FORWARD AND HE FELT A STRANGELY SOOTHING, COOL TOUCH. IT WAS THEN HE REALIZED SOMETHING!

IT--IT'S A FEMALE! SHE'S NURSING ME!...SHE WANTS TO SAVE MY LIFE! IF---IF ONLY SHE CAN!

"AGAIN PAUL FELL INTO A COMA AND THE DAYS PASSED INTO WEEKS IN WHICH HE WAS SOMETIMES AWAKE, SOMETIMES ASLEEP. ALL THE WHILE, THE CREATURE NURSED HIM FAITHFULLY, NEVER LEAVING HIS SIDE, BATHING AND TENDING HIS WOUNDS, BRINGING HIM FOOD! HE BEGAN TO RECUPERATE AND FINALLY ONE DAY---

I'M ALIVE AND WELL AGAIN--THANKS TO HER! SHE SAVED ME!

THANK YOU---THANK YOU. I CAN NEVER TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM!

"PAUL BROKE OFF HIS STORY THERE, AND IN THE BLACKNESS OF HIS ROOM I SAT SILENTLY LISTENING AS HE CONCLUDED. I COULD UNDERSTAND HIS FEELINGS, I THOUGHT!

DARLING, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'VE GONE THROUGH. I STILL LOVE YOU!

NO---LET ME FINISH. HER ONLY REQUEST FOR SAVING MY LIFE WAS THAT I STAY THERE AND BE HERS FOREVER! I HAD TO AGREE, MONA, OR BE KILLED! I JUST CAME BACK HERE TO GET SOME OF MY THINGS!

PAUL! THAT'S RIDICULOUS! YOU-- YOU CAN'T LIVE ALL YOUR LIFE WITH THAT TRIBE OF PRIMITIVE, CANNIBALISTIC PEOPLE JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE GRATEFUL TO ONE CREATURE!

I'VE GOT TO, MONA. I PROMISED HER! WE'RE GOING BACK THE WAY WE CAME---- UNSEEN!

WE?? YOU--YOU MEAN SHE'S HERE WITH YOU!?

"PAUL SAID SHE WAS IN THE NEXT ROOM, THAT THEY'D TRAVELED HERE BY NIGHT, UNOBSERVED. I KNEW THE LAY-OUT OF HIS SMALL APARTMENT AND AS I STRODE FOR THE OTHER ROOM, PAUL'S VOICE ROSE SHARPLY!

LET ME TALK TO HER! APPARENTLY SHE UNDERSTANDS YOU SO I'LL MAKE HER UNDERSTAND ME! THIS WHOLE IDEA IS RIDICULOUS. IT'D NEVER WORK OUT!

NO!...MONA!.. STOP!

"IGNORING PAUL, I OPENED THE DOOR OF THE OTHER ROOM AND SNAPPED ON THE LIGHT. THE ODOR I'D DETECTED UPON ENTERING THE APARTMENT ROSE OVERWHELMINGLY! I STAGGERED BACK AGAINST THE WALL AS "SHE" FACED ME!

OH, NO...NO!

GOOD LORD!..... GOOD LORD! OH, PAUL. ---PAUL!

"THIS WAS BEYOND BELIEF, BEYOND THE DARKEST REALMS OF HUMAN IMAGINATION. "SHE".. THIS CREATURE WAS A THING TO UNHINGE THE MIND, AS IT MUST HAVE TO PAUL THESE PAST WEEKS! I HAD TO MAKE HIM LISTEN TO ME! SICK WITH REVULSION, I FOUND THE LIGHT SWITCH IN THE OUTER ROOM AND-

PAUL, YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME-- YOU MUST!

NO, MONA! NO...NO! OOOH!

"PAUL'S VOICE ALMOST SCREAMED. I TURNED AND---"

NO...NO---EEEE! EEEE! EEEE!

AND ONCE AGAIN, THE BARRENNESS OF THE POLICE STATION ECHOED TO THE GIRL'S HYSTERICAL SCREAMS. RISING TO HIS FEET, THE YOUNG AMBULANCE DOCTOR MOTIONED TO HIS ATTENDANTS.

THERE--THERE HE WAS!.. OH!.. EEEEEEE!.... EEEEEEEE!!

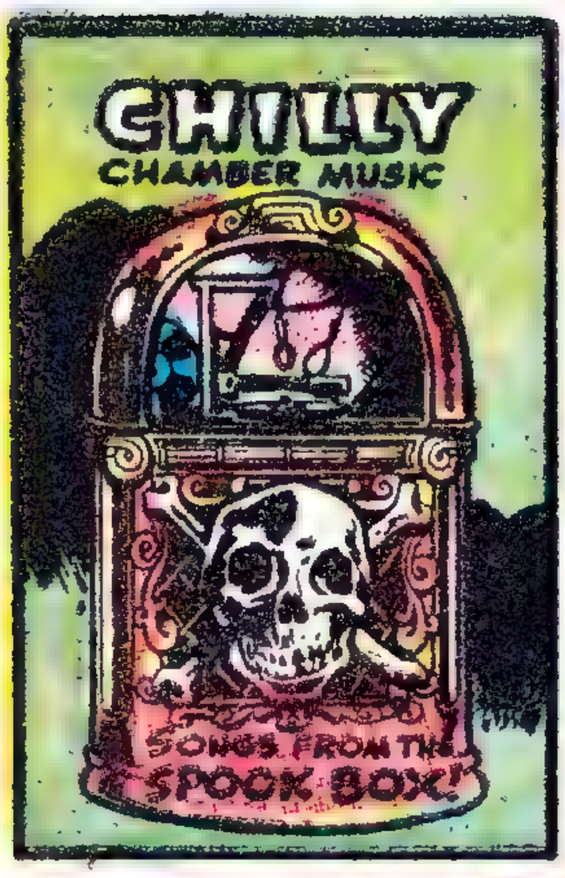
TAKE HER TO WARD EIGHT! POOR KID--SHE'S IN A BAD WAY! A COMPLETE MENTAL CRACK-UP. SHE'LL NEED LONG TREATMENT.

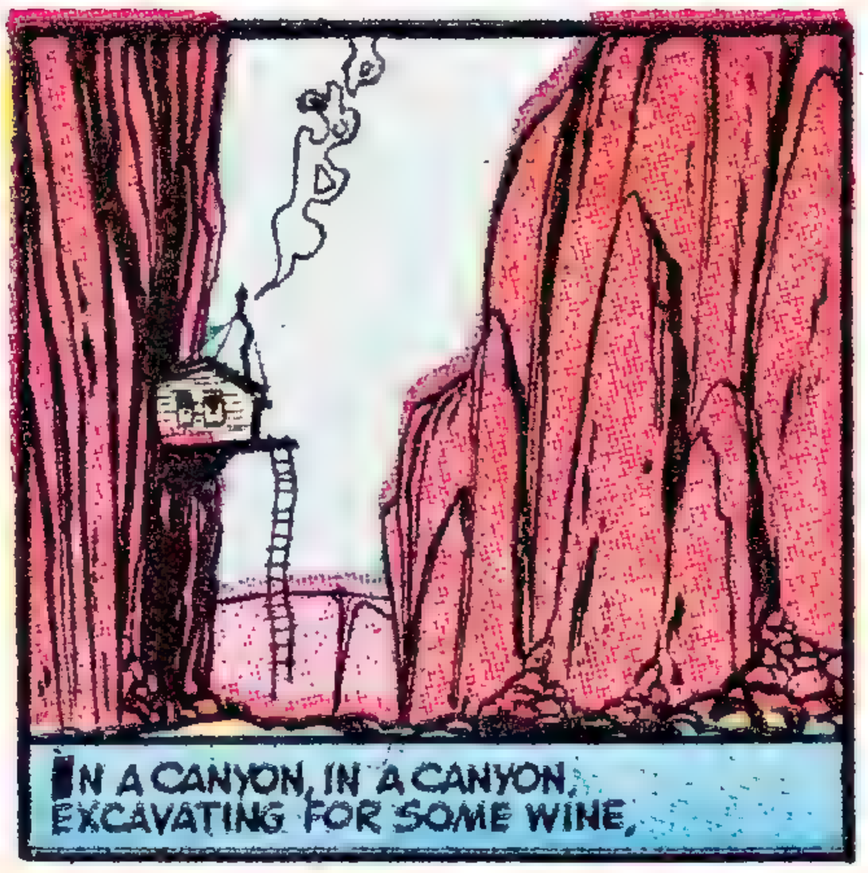
PROBABLY, IT'S BEEN COMING ON EVER SINCE NEWS OF THE EXPEDITION'S LOSS IN THE AIR CRASH! ONLY A MIND COMPLETELY SNAPPED COULD CONJURE UP A STORY LIKE THAT---AND LIVE IT AS IF IT'D REALLY HAPPENED!

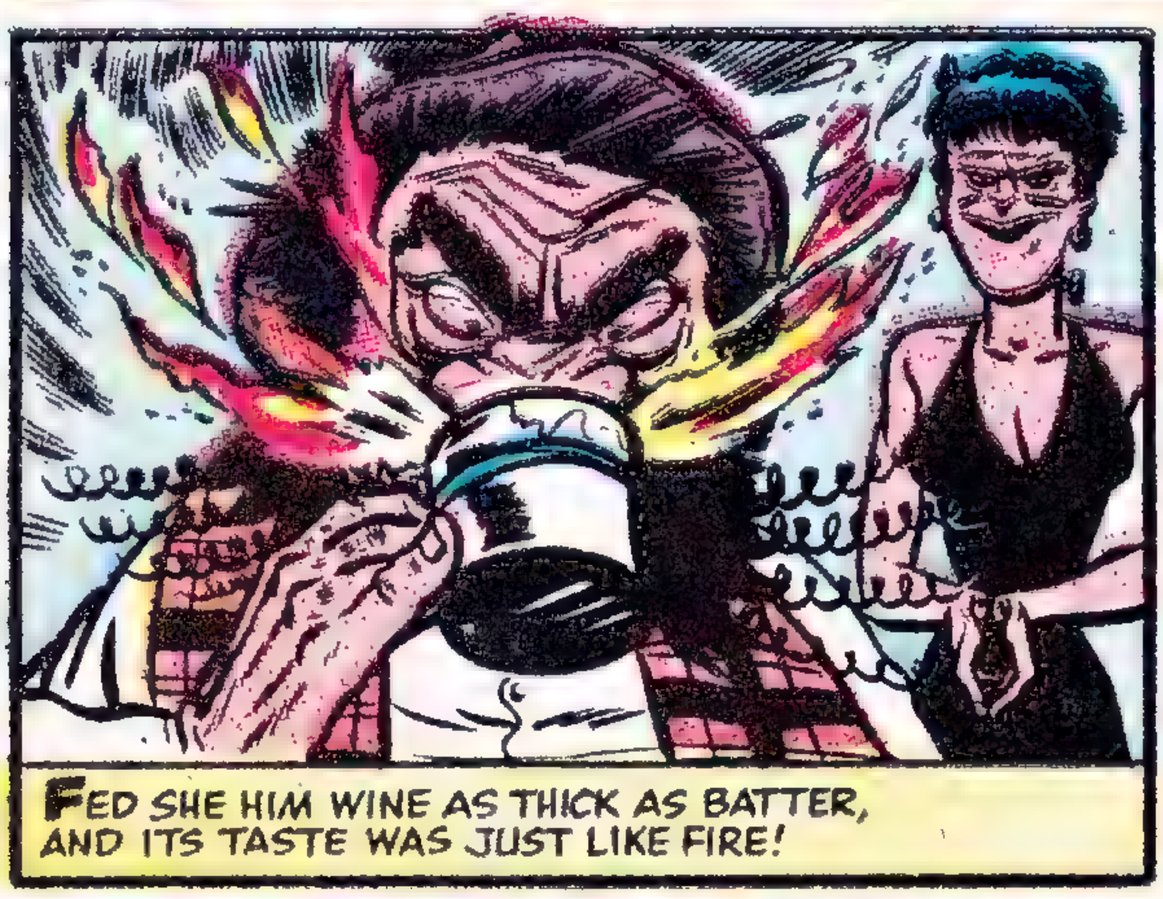
I GUESS SO, DOC ---EXCEPT FOR ONE THING! MAYBE YOU HAVE AN ANSWER!

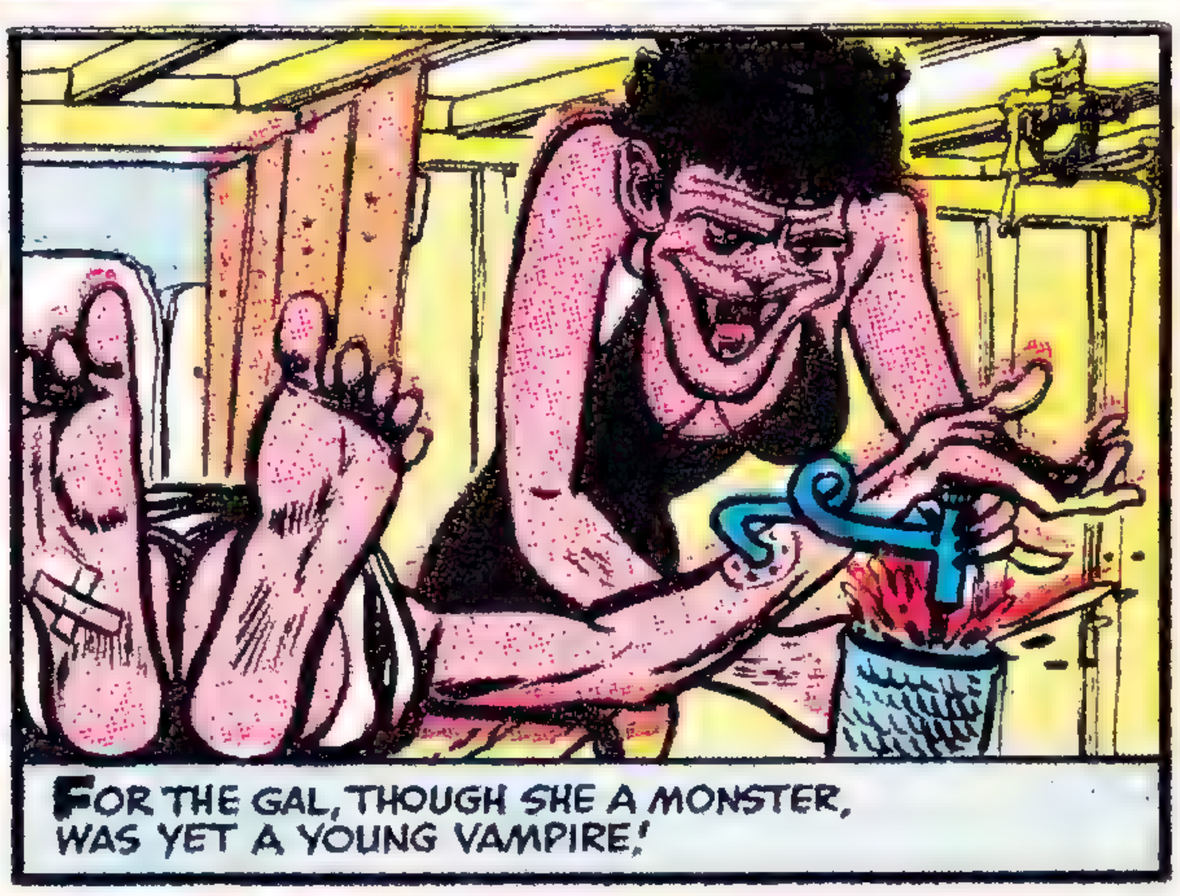
THIS---! WE FOUND IT ON THE FLOOR OF PAUL FOWLER'S ROOM. THEY'RE LEAVES FROM THE BLOSSOM OF THE CANNON BALL TREE!....IT'S FOUND ONLY IN THE JUNGLES OF SOUTH AMERICA!

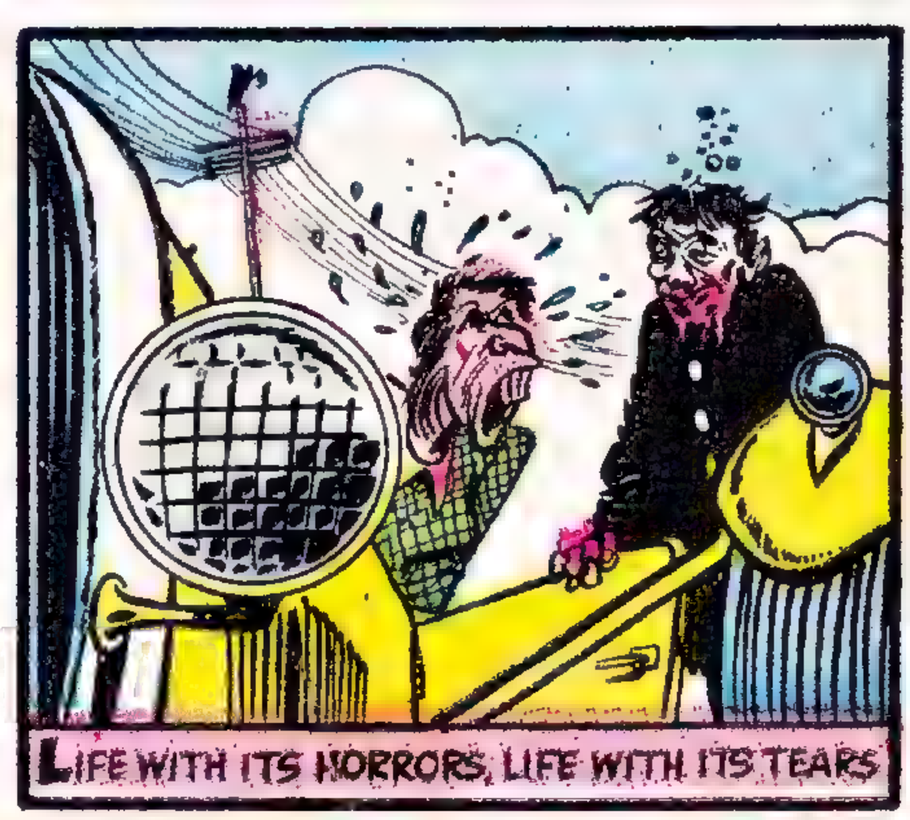
THE ROOM WAS SILENT AS THE MEN LOOKED DOWN AT THE HALF-DRIED PETALS. THEY UTTERED NO SOUND, BUT THEIR EYES SPOKE THOUGHTS THEY DARED NOT VOICE, THOUGHTS FROM WHICH MAN **MUST** TURN ASIDE, OR FOREVER TREMBLE AT THE BRINK OF ETERNITY!

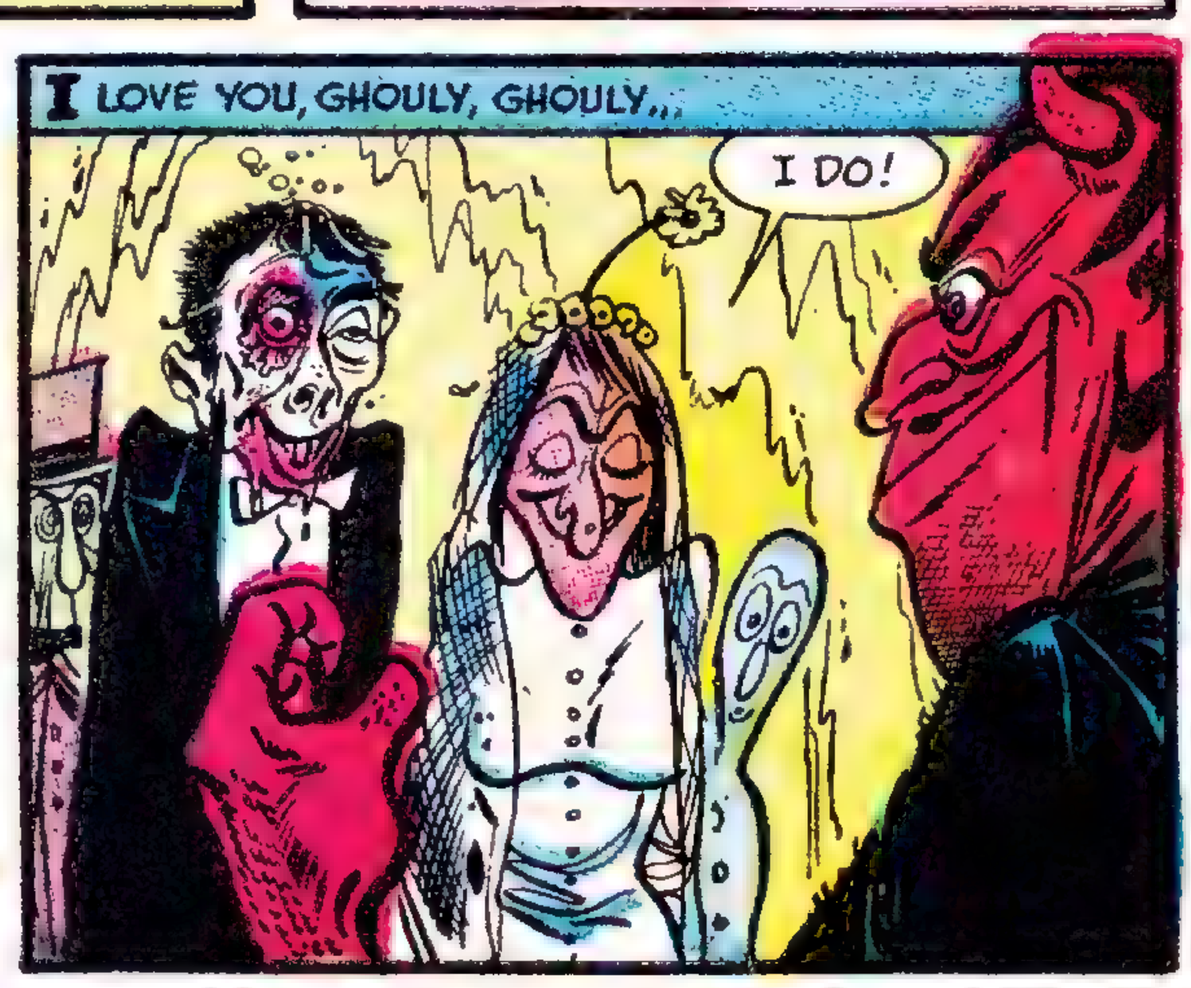




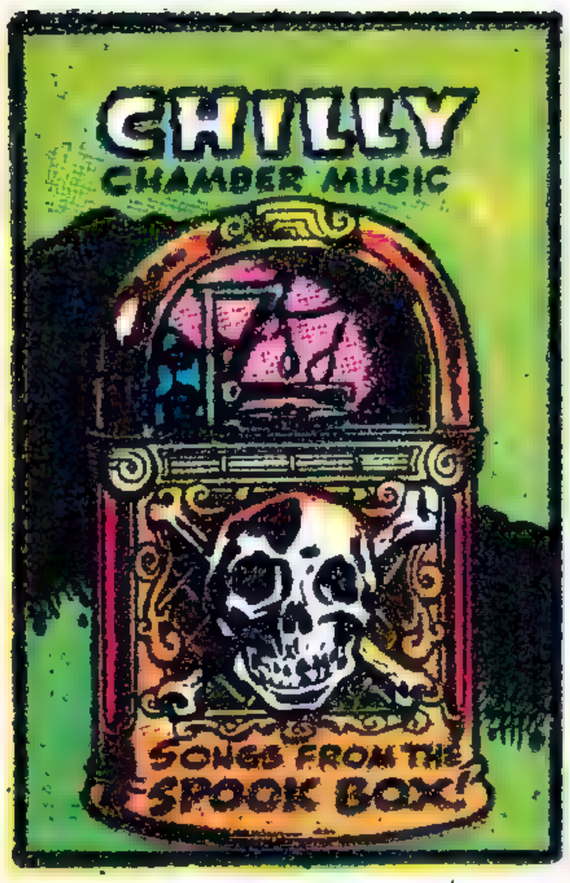


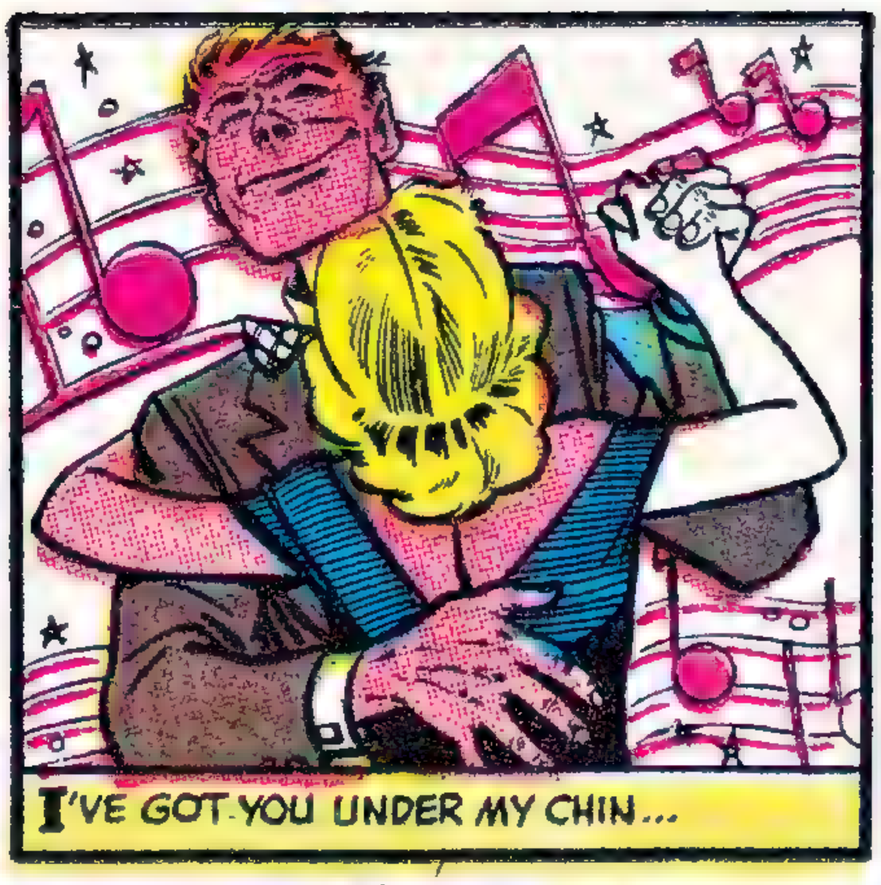




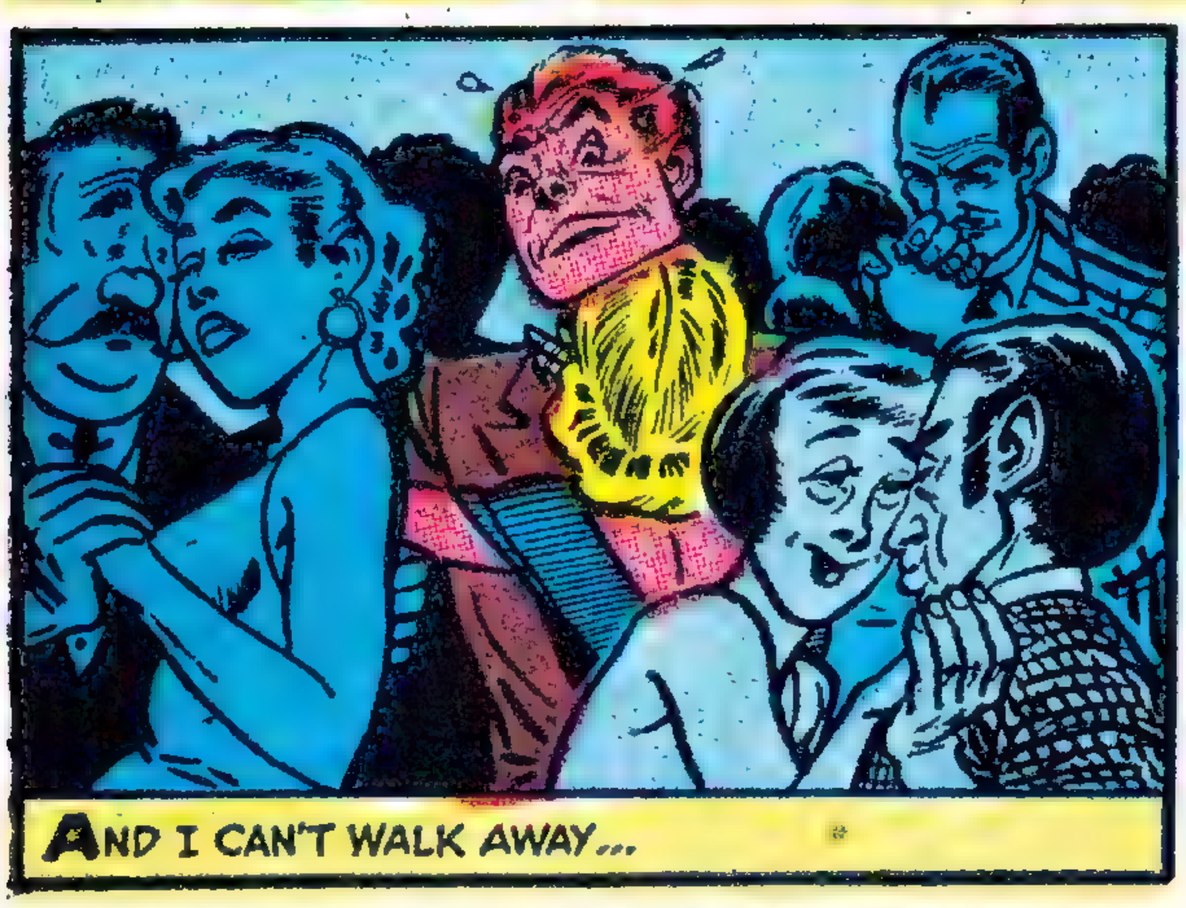


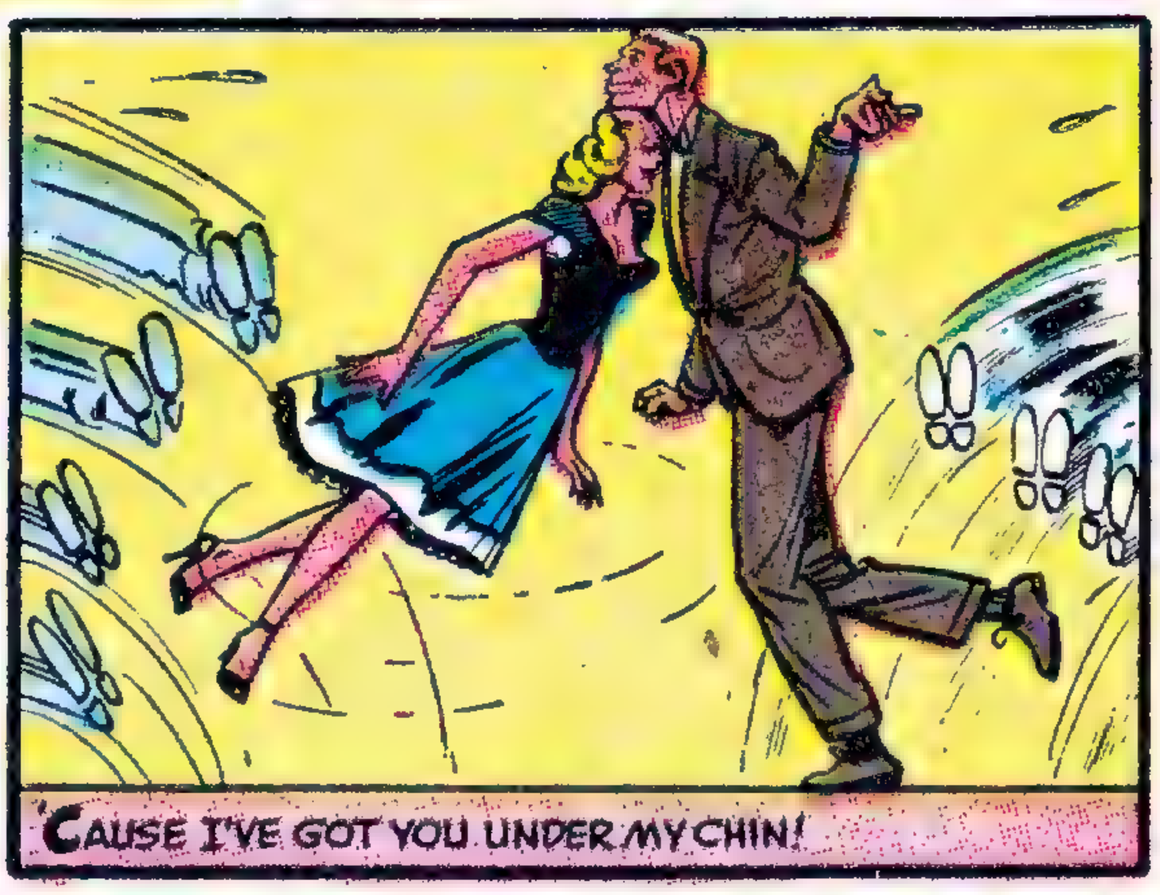
Chamber of Chills #23, May 1954. Art: Bob Powell and Howard Nostrand. Publisher: Harvey Comics.


CHILLY
CHAMBER MUSIC
SONGS FROM THE SPOOK BOX!


I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY CHIN...

THE MUSIC PLAYS, THE DANCERS SWAY...


AND I CAN'T WALK AWAY...


'CAUSE I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY CHIN!

CHILLY
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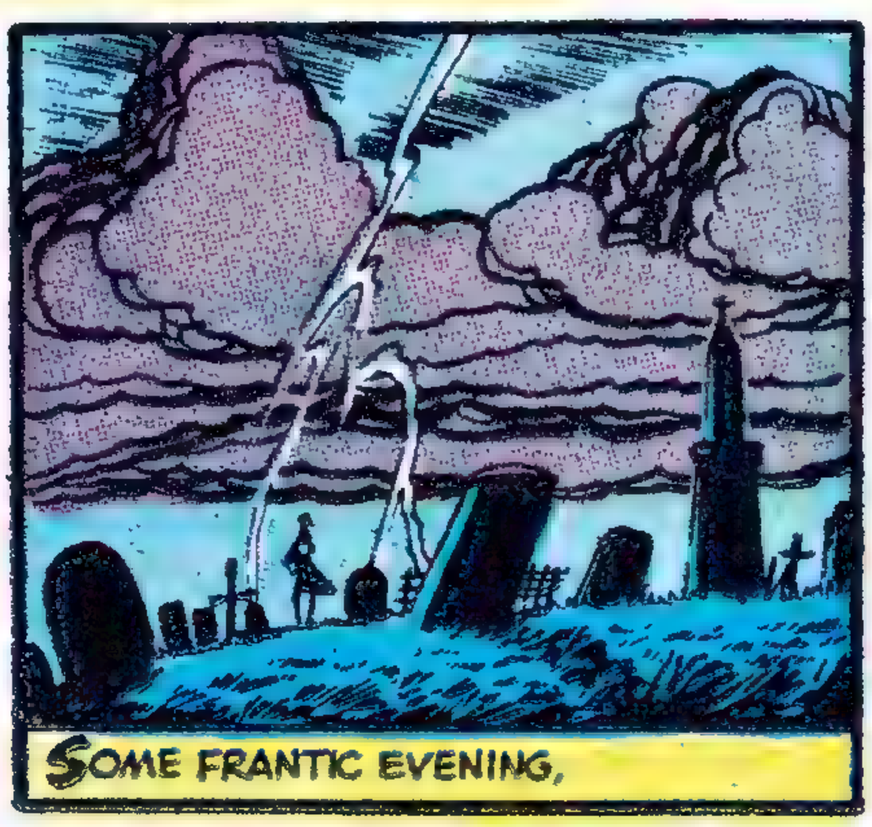
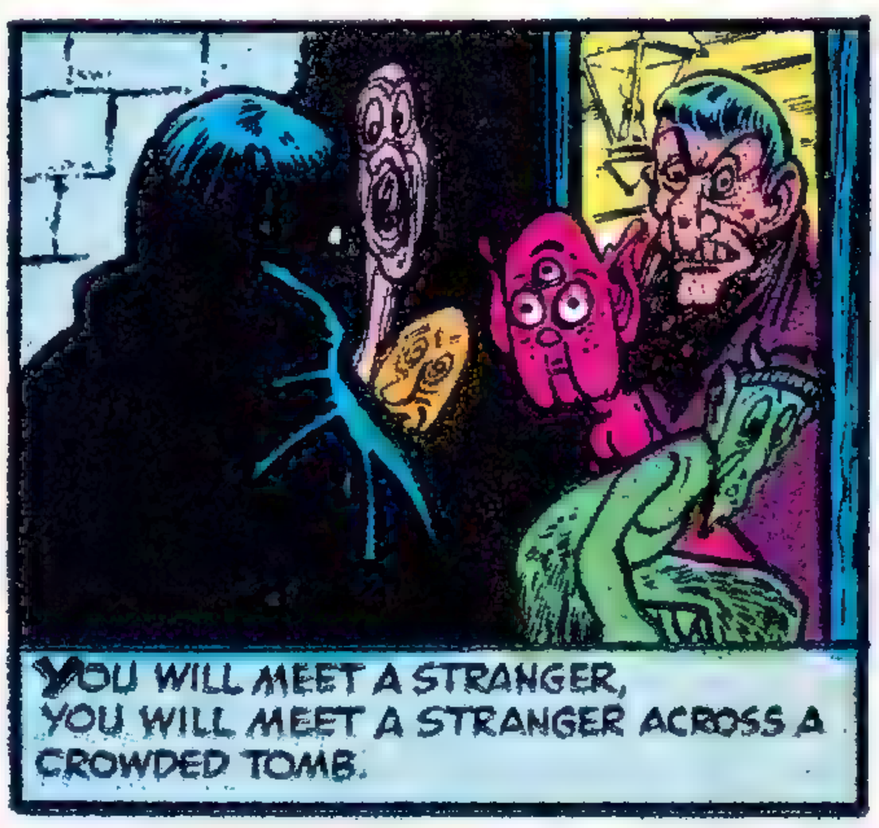
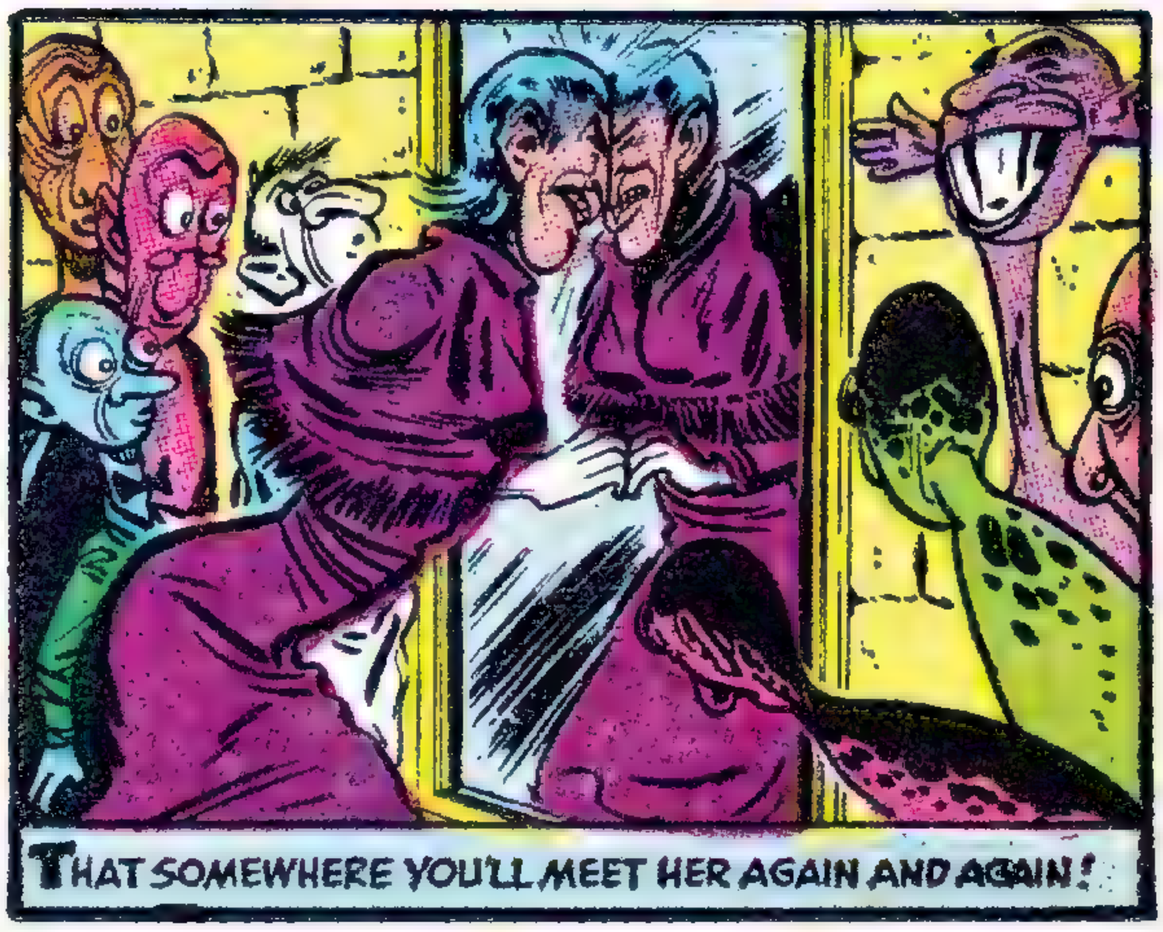
SONGS FROM THE SPOOK BOX!


SOME FRANTIC EVENING,

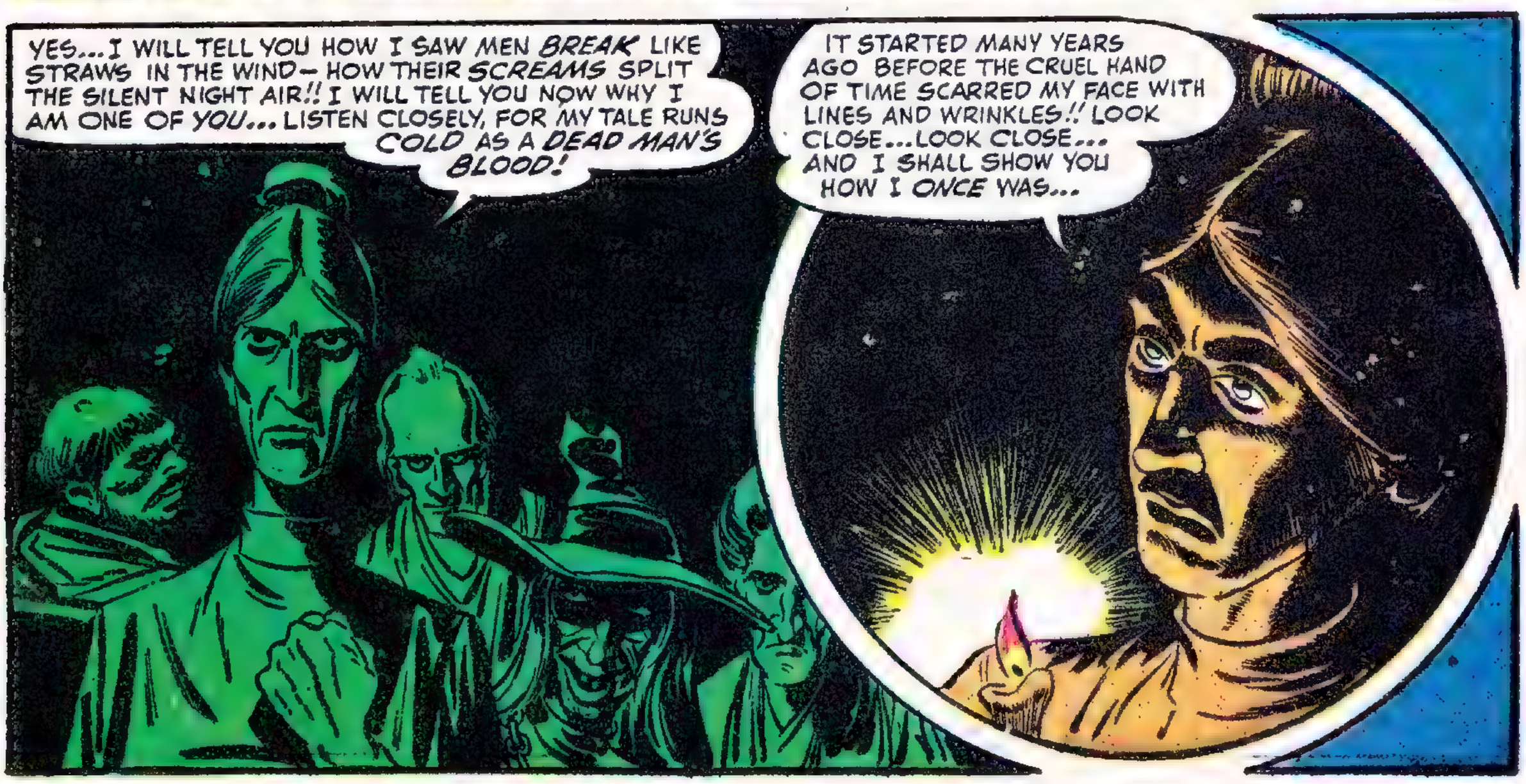

YOU WILL MEET A STRANGER,
YOU WILL MEET A STRANGER ACROSS A CROWDED TOMB.

THEN SOMEHOW YOU'LL KNOW, YOU'LL KNOW EVEN THEN...


THAT SOMEWHERE YOU'LL MEET HER AGAIN AND AGAIN!

ON FRIDAYS, THE 13TH, THE PRACTITIONERS OF EVIL AND SORCERY MEET TO INITIATE THE APPRENTICED EVIL ONES INTO THE INNER CIRCLE! THIS IS HOW DORA MAYBERRY WAS AN APPRENTICE IN...

DEATH BY WITCHCRAFT!


YES... I WILL TELL YOU HOW I SAW MEN *BREAK* LIKE STRAWS IN THE WIND— HOW THEIR *SCREAMS* SPLIT THE SILENT NIGHT AIR!! I WILL TELL YOU NOW WHY I AM ONE OF *YOU*... LISTEN CLOSELY, FOR MY TALE RUNS *COLD* AS A *DEAD MAN'S BLOOD!*
IT STARTED MANY YEARS AGO BEFORE THE CRUEL HAND OF TIME SCARRED MY FACE WITH LINES AND WRINKLES!! LOOK CLOSE... LOOK CLOSE... AND I SHALL SHOW YOU HOW I *ONCE* WAS...

Witches Tales #4, July 1951. Art: Vic Donahue. Publisher: Harvey Comics.

I WAS A YOUNG, AMBITIOUS GIRL THEN— IGNORANT OF THE WICKEDNESS IN THE WORLD...THINKING ONLY OF ARNOLD CAVENDISH...AND *MYSELF!*

HEEE-HEEEE-HEEEEE!! SEE HOW SHE TRANSFORMS HERSELF! GO ON... TELL US, NEW *DAUGHTER OF DARKNESS!*

MISS DORA...THERE'S A MR. CAVENDISH DOWN-STAIRS IN THE WAITING ROOM...SUCH A DISTINGUISHED LOOKING GENTLEMAN!

THANK YOU...TELL HIM I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN...

DORA, MY DEAR!

ARNOLD, I...I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT YOU *ALL* DAY!! OH, ARNOLD— YOU MUSTN'T...THE WALLS HAVE EARS...*AND* EYES!!

ARNOLD WAS MORE THAN A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN MYSELF— BUT THEN, IT WAS NOT THE *MAN* I WAS INTERESTED IN REALLY!! I KNEW, AS EVERY GIRL LIVING IN TOWN KNEW, THAT HE WAS THE ONLY LIVING RELATIVE OF HIS UNCLE, CORNELIUS CAVENDISH, THE BILLIONAIRE!!

...AND HOW IS YOUR *POOR, DEAR* UNCLE CORNELIUS, ARNOLD...ANY BETTER?

THE OLD BOY IS *SINKING*...I PICKED YOU UP SO THAT YOU COULD GO WITH ME TO SEE HIM...*POOR, DEAR* UNCLE CORNELIUS! HA-HA-HA-HA!

DO YOU REALIZE WHAT IT WILL MEAN WHEN THE OLD COOT DIES? WHY, I'LL BE ONE OF THE RICHEST IN THE COUNTRY! AND *YOU*, MY SWEET, WILL BE MY WIFE!!

YES, ARNOLD... WE *HAVE* BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME!

HURRY, MR. CAVENDISH...I'M AFRAID THE OLD MAN IS LOW...

IF I KNOW MY UNCLE, HE WOULDN'T DIE WITHOUT GIVING EVEN *DEATH* A STRUGGLE!!

(COUGH-COUGH-COUGH) LET GO OF ME, DRAT YE! I DON'T NEED A BLASTED WOMAN TO HOLD *ME* UP!! (COUGH-COUGH) EIGHTY YEARS I'VE STOOD ON MY OWN TWO FEET!!

SO YOU'VE COME TO SEE ME DIE, EH? (COUGH-COUGH) AND YOU BACK THERE! I SUPPOSE YOU'RE COUNTING MY MONEY ALREADY!! I KNOW YOUR KIND... I CAN SEE THE GREED IN YOUR EYES!

NOW, NOW, UNCLE! YOU KNOW WE BOTH WISH THE BEST FOR YOU!

MY MONEY WILL BRING YOU NOTHING BUT GRIEF!! (COUGH-COUGH) MARK MY... WORDS... OHOOOO!!

I... I'D BETTER CALL A DOCTOR... HE... HE LOOKS...

DON'T BE A FOOL! STAY HERE... MAYBE THIS IS IT!

WE STOOD AND WATCHED THE OLD MAN GASP FOR BREATH, FLAIL HIS ARMS AS IF HE WERE GRAPPLING WITH THE *INVISIBLE FORCE OF DEATH!!* FINALLY, THERE WAS A LONG, LOW RATTLE AND THEN, SILENCE. WHEN THE DOCTOR CAME...

MR. CAVENDISH! OH, WHY DIDN'T SOMEONE CALL ME??

IT... IT ALL HAPPENED SO QUICKLY, DOCTOR...

ARNOLD... TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE...

WELL, THE OLD MISER'S FINALLY *DEAD!* UH - HOW I *HATE* THE THOUGHT OF *OLD AGE!!* EVEN WITH ALL HIS MONEY, HE COULD *NOT OUTWIT* THE *RAVAGES* OF TIME!! AWAY, OLD WOMAN!! YOU, TOO, MAKE ME FEAR THE *WRINKLED* AND *DISEASED* YEARS!!

ARNOLD! NO, *DON'T!*

OHHH!

HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A MEAN THING?

WELL, THE OLD WRETCH ANNOYED ME! I'M RICH NOW... I'M POWERFUL! I CAN DO *ANYTHING* I CHOOSE -- EXCEPT BUY OFF TIME! BUT I'LL FIND A WAY EVEN TO DO *THAT!*

SOB!

ARNOLD CAVENDISH INHERITED EVERYTHING! BUT HE KEPT DELAYING THE DAY OF OUR MARRIAGE, MAKING EXCUSES. HE WAS DRUNK WITH HIS NEW POWER... AND THE TARGET FOR EVERY GOLD DIGGER...

HELLO, MR. CAVENDISH...

WHY, MR. CAVENDISH!

C'MON, BABY - JOIN US!! HELP ME *PASS* THE *TIME AWAY!*

ARNOLD, EVER SINCE YOUR UNCLE'S DEATH YOU'VE BEEN THROWING MONEY, AWAY, CHASING OTHER WOMEN...MAKING EXCUSES TO ME! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHO HELPED YOU WHEN YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CENT...WHO HAS KEPT YOUR SECRET ABOUT THE HOSPITAL... WHO HAS...OH!

I'M TIRED OF YOUR NAGGING, DORA – I DON'T NEED *YOU* ANY LONGER, NOR YOUR SHARP TONGUE! HERE'S MY PARTING GESTURE TO YOU!

THAT BLOW BURST THE *BOILING FURY* THAT HAD BEEN *SEETHING* WITHIN ME FOR DAYS!!

ARNOLD CAVENDISH, I'LL *MAKE YOU PAY* FOR THIS *HUMILIATION* AND *BETRAYAL* IF IT TAKES ME *ALL* THE DAYS OF MY LIFE!

HAHAHAHAHA!

FOR SEVERAL DAYS I PACED MY ROOM LIKE A CAPTURED *BEAST!* I WANTED TO STRIKE BACK, TO *CLAW*... TO *KILL*, BUT HOW...HOW?? THEN, I REMEMBERED FROM THE DAYS OF MY CHILDHOOD AN OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A DISMAL SECTION OF OF TOWN...

MADAM SATANA... I'VE COME FOR YOUR HELP. I WANT TO LEARN...??

ENTER, DORA MAYBERRY...I *KNOW* WHY YOU SEEK ME...MADAM SATANA KNOWS ALL THE EVILS IN THE HUMAN MIND...

MADAM SATANA

THE OLDER WOMEN OF MY MOTHER'S DAY WHISPER -THAT YOU HAVE THE POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH, THE FUTURE AND THE PAST... THAT YOU KNOW HOW TO USE CHARMS, LOVE POTIONS AND CURSES...*EVIL* CURSES! BUT TELL ME, HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME??

SATANA COULD FEEL THE VIBRATIONS OF YOUR POWERFUL THOUGHTS OF *VENGEANCE!!* FOR A PRICE...HEEE-HEEE...FOR A PRICE, I WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO USE THE *WEAPONS* OF SORCERY!!

YES, I WILL PAY ANYTHING! SOME SAY WOMEN ARE WEAK...BUT WE *CAN* DO EVIL!! I WANT ARNOLD CAVENDISH TO LEARN THIS!!

AHA! *HELL* HATH NO FURY LIKE A WOMAN SCORNED! AND IN THAT LIES THE HISTORY OF WITCHERY! NOW, LET US LOOK INTO THIS CRYSTAL – THE EYE THAT SEES ALL...

YOU SOUND KIND OF OFF YOUR ROCKER TO ME, CAVENDISH...BUT IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, IT'S OKAY WITH ME!!

THEN WE'RE AGREED! IN TWENTY YEARS, YOU WILL *KILL ME!!* BUT REMEMBER, IT MUST BE *PAINLESSLY!* AND, IN MY WILL, I SHALL LEAVE YOU BOTH $5000!! HA-HA! THIS WAY I CAN LIVE AS I PLEASE AND NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE EFFECTS WHEN I'M *OLD!* I'LL *NEVER* BE OLD!!

OKAY, CAVENDISH- YOU'VE MADE A DEAL! YOU HAVE SIGNED YOUR *DEATH* PACT!!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SPIKE?

WAITER! BRING ANOTHER BOTTLE! MY FRIENDS AND I ARE CELEBRATING! WE'VE JUST OUTWITTED TIME!

OH, JUST HUMOR HIM...HE'S BUYIN' THE DRINKS, AIN'T HE?

ARNOLD CAVENDISH IS A *FOOL* — NOTHING THAT LIVES OUTWITS TIME! WELL, MY DEAR, HE IS EVIL AND GREEDY...ON SUCH MEN I CAN WORK MY SPELLS!

NO! I WANT YOU TO TEACH *ME*... I WANT THE SATISFACTION OF MAKING HIM *SQUIRM*! WE HAVE A SCORE TO SETTLE...

DORA MAYBERRY, DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU ARE SAYING??!! YOU WISH TO BECOME ONE OF US! I GIVE YOU FAIR WARNING! ONCE YOU HAVE STARTED, TURNING BACK MEANS *DEATH*! IT MAY TAKE YEARS...

I UNDERSTAND... AND I AM WILLING...

I SPENT LONG DAYS AND NIGHTS READING THE ANCIENT BOOKS OF EVIL... PRACTICING THE *BLACK ARTS*! THE STUDY OF EVIL DRAINED AWAY MY LOOKS, MY YOUTH...BUT I TRADED THEM WILLINGLY FOR THE POWER TO *CONJURE*, *CURSE* AND *TORTURE* THE *MINDS* OF THE *GUILTY*! SEVEN YEARS LATER...

SO YOU'RE THE HOUSEKEEPER THE AGENCY SENT OVER...YOU LOOK FAMILIAR! BY THE WAY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WOMAN THEY SAID THEY WERE GOING TO SEND?

SHE WAS TAKEN *SUDDENLY ILL*, SIR...AND THEY SENT ME, INSTEAD. MY NAME IS ... MISS BIXBY!

OHOO...I..I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME... EVERYTHING WENT BLACK...

THE AGENCY SENT ME. I'M SORRY I WAS DELAYED BUT I BECAME *STRANGELY ILL* ON THE WAY OVER HERE.

SORRY, BUT THE POSITION HAS BEEN FILLED! GOOD DAY...

WHO IS IT, MISS BIXBY?

IT WAS JUST AN OLD BEGGAR, MR. CAVENDISH...

OLD BEGGAR? KEEP 'EM AWAY FROM HERE, MISS BIXBY...I *HATE* THE SIGHT OF THESE *OLD* TRAMPS... PEOPLE *SQUEEZED DRY* BY TIME! KEEP 'EM AWAY, D'YOU HEAR?

NOW THAT I WAS IN ARNOLD'S HOUSE, I PUT MY PLAN OF VENGEANCE INTO QUICK ACTION! IN THE *DEAD OF NIGHT*, I PREPARED THE FIRST STEP...

A LITTLE OF *THIS* IN YOUR MEAT TOMORROW, MY *SWEET* AND *EVER* LOVING ARNOLD, AND YOU WILL DREAM! HA-HA... *HOW* YOU WILL DREAM!! YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER DORA MAYBERRY... BUT I PROMISE YOU, YOU'LL NOT FORGET MISS BIXBY...

THE NEXT NIGHT, WHEN ARNOLD *SCREAMED*, IT WAS MUSIC TO MY EARS! THE POTION WAS WORKING! HOW LONG HAD I WAITED TO MAKE THE MAN WHO *BETRAYED* ME *WRITHE* WITH *TERROR*... BUT THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

YOU TWO! THE PACT... BUT... BUT IT ISN'T TIME!! NO! NO! I *DON'T* WANT TO *DIE*!!! KEEP BACK!! *HELP*!!

WE ALWAYS KEEP OUR BARGAINS!

MR. CAVENDISH, WAKE UP! YOU'RE HAVING A NIGHTMARE!

HUH? WH...!! OH, THANK GOODNESS, IT'S YOU, MISS BIXBY! I... I WAS HAVING A TERRIBLE DREAM... ABOUT TWO MEN I KNEW YEARS AGO! ONE WAS A SAILOR... THE OTHER A... NO! I CAN'T TALK ABOUT IT! ...IT WAS TOO HORRIBLE!!

DID YOU SAY A SAILOR, AND ANOTHER MAN? WHY, MR. CAVENDISH, I *SAW* TWO MEN, ONE WAS A SAILOR, LURKING AROUND THE GROUNDS WHILE YOU WERE OUT THIS AFTERNOON! THEY WERE POINTING UP TO THIS VERY WINDOW...

WHAT??! YOU *DID*?? OH, THEY'VE COME TO *KILL* ME... THEY WANT THE MONEY I PROMISED THEM IN MY WILL... BUT NOW THEY WON'T WAIT!

THERE ARE WAYS, MR. CAVENDISH, OF GETTING RID OF ENEMIES... SECRET WAYS... YOU KNOW, I AM NOT ALWAYS A HOUSEKEEPER...

COULD YOU HELP ME, MISS BIXBY? OH, I WOULD GIVE YOU ANYTHING... *ANYTHING* TO BE RID OF THEM NOW! I WAS SUCH A FOOL ONCE! HELP ME, MISS BIXBY, AND I'LL MAKE *YOU* HEIR TO ALL MY FORTUNE... IT WILL BE *ALL* YOURS!!

EVERYTHING WAS WORKING AS I HAD PLANNED! SOON AFTER, I WENT TO MY TEACHER FOR THE HELP I STILL NEEDED. THERE, IN THE ROOM FULL OF *SHADOWS* AND THE SMELL OF *STRANGE HERBS*...

SATANA! I HAVE NEED OF THE MAGIC EYE! I SEEK TWO MEN – THOSE WHOM WE SAW WITH ARNOLD CAVENDISH MANY YEARS AGO WHEN HE MADE THE DEATH PACT...

COME, DORA – WE WILL FIND THEM...

HURRY IT UP, SPIKE... I'VE GOT THE DARNDEST FEELING THAT *WE'RE BEING WATCHED!*

I HAD A FEELIN' SOMETHIN' WOULD GO WRONG!

WE GOTTA MAKE A BREAK FOR IT...

WELL I'LL BE DARNED! THAT WOMAN WHO PHONED IN THE TIP-OFF OF THIS ROBBERY WAS RIGHT!

ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO ...HOLD IT, OR YOU'RE *DEAD MEN!*

I WARNED YOU NOT TO TRY THAT! YOU ASKED FOR IT!

RAT-ATAT ATAT-ATAT- TAT-TAT- TAT- TAT-

UH-H-H-H!

AHHHHHH..

WHAT *ASTOUNDING* LUCK!! YES, MISS BIXBY—THOSE *ARE* THE TWO MEN!! I DON'T KNOW HOW *YOU* COULD HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS—BUT CERTAINLY YOUR WORKING FOR ME HAS BROUGHT ME GOOD FORTUNE!

TWO SLAIN IN ROBBERY!

THAT NIGHT, ARNOLD CAVENDISH WENT TO HIS BED FEELING SAFE AND SECURE! LITTLE DID HE REALIZE THE *HORRORS* I WAS BREWING—HORRORS THAT COULD *CRACK* THE *BRAIN* THE WAY SUDDEN COLD CRACKS HOT METAL...

HEE-HEE... WAKE UP, MR. CAVENDISH— YOU HAVE VISITORS.. HEE-HEEEE!!

THE TIME HAS COME, ARNOLD CAVENDISH...

DOOM IS HERE, ARNOLD CAVENDISH...

BUT...BUT YOU'RE BOTH... D-D-*DEAD!*

THE MAN TURNED *GREEN* WITH FEAR!! FOR A MOMENT HE REMAINED *RIGID* AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE BOLTED UP AND RAN BLINDLY TOWARD THE BEDROOM WINDOW, HIS EYEBALLS STRAINING IN THEIR SOCKETS, HIS FACE *TWISTED* WITH *TERROR*...

NO...*NO*...NO-O-O-O-OOOO!!

WHAT? DEAD SO SOON, ARNOLD? NOT EVEN A LITTLE MORE LIFE TO WRIGGLE OFF THE POINTS OF DEATH? WHAT A PITY...*HEE-HEE-HEEE!*

AND NOW YOU TWO CAN GO BACK TO YOUR RESTLESS GRAVES...AWAY!

WOOSH!

...AND ALL OF YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW I, HA-HA, MOURNED, HOW I CRIED, THE DAY ARNOLD WAS BURIED! AND NOW HIS FORTUNE, HIS MANSION, ARE ALL MINE!! THAT IS MY STORY, SATANA!

THE DAWN APPROACHES...WE MUST HURRY! WE ARE *NOT* THE CREATURES OF *LIGHT*- BUT OF *NIGHT*!! COME, FRIENDS, WE MUST VOTE IF DORA MAYBERRY IS WORTHY TO JOIN US!

AND THERE, IN THE WEAK LIGHT OF MORNING, THOSE MEMBERS OF THE *LAST* AND *INNER CIRCLE* OF *EVIL* LEERED GLADLY AS THEY ADMITTED ME TO THEIR REALM FROM WHICH THERE IS *NO RETURN*, AND FROM WHICH THERE IS *NO HOPE* OF SALVATION...

YOU ARE ONE OF US, DORA.. A *WITCH OF DARKNESS*, LIKE MYSELF! YOU WILL DO EVIL UNTIL SOMEDAY, LIKE ALL OF US, YOU MUST *PAY* FOR YOUR *FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE*, AND *SUFFER ETERNITY* IN THE *FIERY DEPTHS*!! WELCOME...

AND SO I WENT BACK TO THE OLD CAVENDISH MANSION, THERE TO BECOME A PRACTITIONER OF THE BLACK ARTS, THERE TO GROW OLD AND WITHERED LIKE THE MANSION ITSELF, THERE TO LIVE OUT MY WRETCHED LIFE UNTIL THE *BLACK DAY* OF MY DEATH WOULD CLAIM ME...

MADAME MAYBERRY, I HAVE HEARD THAT YOU HAVE STRANGE POWERS—THAT YOU CAN CURSE, CHARM, CONJURE...I NEED YOUR HELP! THERE IS A MAN I *HATE* WHO HAS *BETRAYED* ME...

ENTER, MY CHILD... *ENTER*!! YOU HAVE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE!!

MADAME MAYBERRY

THE END

HELP US TO DIE!

DRINK IT AND YOU SHALL LIVE FOREVER! ETERNAL LIFE! HA, HA, HA!

NEVER GET SICK! NEVER DIE! THAT'S WHAT I WANT!

SO DO I! GIVE ME MY SHARE! IT'LL BE WONDERFUL!

IF THE WIND IS RIGHT, YOU'LL HEAR THE TERRIBLE, AGONIZED CRIES! THEY SEEM TO COME FROM A RAGGED CLIFF, WHERE STUNTED TREES STAND LIKE SENTINELS TO GUARD A PLACE OF GHASTLY HORROR! BUT DO NOT INVESTIGATE! THAT'S WHAT MARJ AND JIM TORRENCE DID! THEY WANTED TO LIVE FOREVER, AND NOW THEY ARE MOANING... **"HELP US TO DIE!"**

JIM TORRENCE HAD ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN EGYPTOLOGY! IT WAS HIS HOBBY. ONE DAY, WHEN HE AND HIS WIFE, MARJORIE, WERE IN A MUSEUM...

COME ON, LET'S GO TO THE EGYPTIAN ROOM!

EGYPT! GOSH, I'M SICK OF IT! OH, WELL, ALL RIGHT!

LOOK, A MUMMY FROM THE 19TH DYNASTY! THAT'S WHEN AMENHOTEP BUILT THE GREAT AVENUES AT KARNAK AND THE TEMPLE OF LUXOR!

SO WHAT? WE'VE SEEN PLENTY OF MUMMIES!

19TH DYNASTY TIME OF AMENHOTEP

Eerie #13, October 1953. Pencils: Norman Nodel; inks: Vince Alascia. Publisher: Avon.

THEN, SUDDENLY...

AM I CRAZY? JIM--LOOK!

WHA--?! IT'S TRYING TO MOAN! HEAR JT? AN' IT'S EYES ARE OPENING!

OHHHH!

HAD THEY IMAGINED IT? IN ANOTHER INSTANT...

IT'S ALIVE! ALIVE! WHY- WHY--

NO! LOOK, IT'S EYES ARE CLOSED!

THERE WAS NO FURTHER SIGN, AND...

COME ON, LET'S GO!

UGH! GIVE YER THE CREEPS, DON'T IT?

JUST IMAGINE! MORE THAN 3,000 YEARS AGO- THAT MAN WAS ALIVE!

AN IDEA SPRANG INTO JIM TORRENCE'S SCHEMING MIND! AND WHEN THEY GOT HOME...

MARJ, IF WE SAW WHAT WE THOUGHT WE DID WE COULD MAKE BIG MONEY! THAT MUMMY WOULD BE WORLD-FAMOUS! WE'D EXHIBIT--

YOU'RE CRAZY! THAT THING'S BEEN DEAD 3,000 YEARS!

AN' NOW IT'S COMING BACK TO LIFE! HOW DO WE THINK WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE SECRETS OF ANCIENT EGYPT? ETERNAL LIFE! RECORDS SHOW THEY WERE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR IT!

I'LL GET IT OUT OF THE MUSEUM! WE'LL TAKE IT SOMEWHERE! HIDE IT AN' WATCH! SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

STEAL A MUMMY? DON'T BE A SAP! WE'D HAVE THE POLICE AFTER US!

THERE'RE PLENTY OF MUMMIES! I'D DISGUISE IT-- CHANGE THE INSCRIPTIONS! WHY--WE COULD SMUGGLE IT TO EGYPT AN' PRETEND WE JUST FOUND IT THERE!

JIM TORRENCE HAD HIS WAY! AND AT MIDNIGHT THAT NIGHT...

WE CAN PRY OPEN THIS SIDE WINDOW! THE MUMMY'S ON THIS FLOOR!

WATCH YOURSELF! MIGHT BE A WATCHMAN AROUND!

MUSEUM

LUCK WAS WITH THEM! A MOMENT LATER...

THERE HE GOES INTO THAT BAR AN' GRILL! COME ON, NOW'S OUR CHANCE!

NOT VERY HEAVY, IS HE? 3,000 YEARS AND HE'S WASTED AWAY TO ALMOST NOTHING!

JIM, I'M SCARED! WE - WE'LL GET CAUGHT!

AND IN THE CAVE...

I'LL OPEN IT!--SEE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE NOW!

OH, JIM! IT'S WEIRD! HORRIBLE!

BUT THEY WEREN'T CAUGHT! AND IN ANOTHER MOMENT...

I-I GUESS WE'RE ALL RIGHT NOW!

SURE WE ARE! WE'LL FIND A PLACE TO HIDE IT--AN' WATCH IT!

AN HOUR LATER, UP IN THE HILLS...

SEE THAT CAVE? JUST THE PLACE! EASY NOW, DON'T FALL! WE DON'T WANT TO HURT OUR LITTLE FRIEND INSIDE!

SEE, HE **IS** ALIVE! I TOLD YOU!

OHHH!

STRANGE, GRUESOME MYSTERY FROM ACROSS THE ABYSS OF THREE THOUSAND YEARS! NOW MARJ WAS EXCITED, TOO! A GREEDY PAIR, THESE TORRENCES!

HE'S PLEASED! HE WANTS US TO UNWRAP HIM! WAIT'LL WE EXHIBIT **THIS** TO THE PUBLIC! A MAN 3000 YEARS OLD--ADMISSION, FIVE BUCKS!

HE--HE'S ALIVE!

ALIVE! CONSCIOUS! TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEM!

LOOK! HE'S FUMBLING FOR SOMETHING IN HIS CLOTHES!

TRYING TO GET SOMETHING OUT!

HE'S TRYING TO DRINK SOMETHING!

HEY, GIMME THAT!

IT HAS EGYPTIAN WRITING ON IT!

YOU CAN TRANSLATE IT! YOU'VE STUDIED THAT STUFF!

WHAT'S IT SAY?

IT SAYS, "DRINK THIS FOR ETERNAL LIFE!"

ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY! FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH! DOWN THROUGH THE AGES IN EVERY LAND, ALCHEMISTS HAVE SOUGHT IT!

ETERNAL LIFE! OH, JIM! IF-IF WE DRANK SOME--?

WE'D NEVER DIE! NEVER GET SICK! BUT LOOK, HERE'S A WARNING OR SOMETHING! WAIT'LL I DOPE IT OUT!

ONLY THOSE OF ROYAL LINEAGE MAY PARTAKE OF THE SACRED POTION! OTHERS, BEWARE! THE CURSE OF ISIS WILL BE UPON YOU!

GREEDY HUMANS! HISTORY TELLS OF SO MANY WHO SOLD THEMSELVES TO DAMNATION FOR THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE!

WHO'S AFRAID OF TALK LIKE THAT? NOT US, MARJ!

LOOK! THE MUMMY! HE'S ANGRY!

GET AWAY FROM ME! OKAY, I'LL HAVE TO FIGHT A MAN 3,000 YEARS OLD! YOU'RE ASKIN' FOR IT!

OH, JIM! JIM!

NEVER KNOCKED A GUY OUT EASIER!

AAIIEEE!

HE'S DEAD! WON'T BOTHER US ANY MORE!

DEAD? HOW CAN YOU KILL A THING ENDOWED WITH ETERNAL LIFE?

HE-HE'S STILL ALIVE! YOU CAN'T KILL HIM!

OKAY, SO WHAT? HE CAN'T BOTHER US ANY!

GIVE ME MY SHARE!

OKAY! OKAY!

THE AROMATIC LIQUID WAS LIKE A FIRE IN THEIR VEINS! FOR A MOMENT THEIR SENSES SWOOPED--THEN...

OHH--THAT WAS SO WEIRD!

YES, BUT WE'RE OKAY NOW! IMAGINE--WE CAN'T GET SICK! WE CAN'T DIE! NOTHING CAN KILL US!

ETERNAL LIFE! THE DREAM OF ALL MANKIND! JIM AND MARJ TORRENCE KNEW THEN THAT THEY HAD THIS WONDERFUL THING! BUT AS THEY SAT THERE, GLOATING...

JIM! W-WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? I--I FEEL S-SO STRANGE!

WHA-?!

AND IN A MOMENT MORE...

JIM! JIM--WE'RE OLD! OLD! WE'RE GOING TO DIE!

WE'RE GOING TO DIE! THAT CURSED THING LIED TO US!

TO DIE! OH NO! THEY WERE GOING TO LIVE FOREVER--THEY HAD ETERNAL LIFE--WHAT THEY THOUGHT THEY WANTED...

JIM! WE-WE'RE LIKE THAT MUMMY! AND WE CAN'T DIE!

LIKE THIS--FOREVER!

WAS IT A DAY, A WEEK, A YEAR WHICH PASSED? GHASTLY CREATURES DIM OF SIGHT AND HEARING, FEEBLE, WITH ALL LIFE'S FORCES DRAINED AWAY..

ARE YOU STILL HERE, JIM? OHH! I CAN'T STAND IT!

TRAPPED! LIKE THIS--FOREVER!

IMPRISONED, NOT IN DEATH--BUT IN LIFE!

OHHH!--I CAN'T STAND IT!

HELP! OHH--HELP US TO DIE!

THE END

The BAT and the BRAIN

ONE WAS A CREATURE THAT FLUTTERED AND CIRCLED IN THE SHADOWS OF A QUIET LABORATORY-- THE OTHER WAS A MIND THAT FLAPPED THROUGH THE DARK BYWAYS OF ETERNAL MIDNIGHT! TOGETHER, THEY FORMED **THE BAT AND THE BRAIN**-- HIDEOUSLY FUSED BY THE WILL OF A VAMPIRE!

LATE ONE NIGHT--

I'M NO SCIENTIST-- SO I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY DON HAS SHUT HIMSELF IN A LONELY LABORATORY FOR OVER A MONTH! BUT I **AM** THE GIRL HE'S GOING TO **MARRY**-- AND NO EXPERIMENT'S GOING TO KEEP US APART ANOTHER MOMENT!

Skeleton Hand in Secrets of the Supernatural #2, November – December 1952. Art: Gus Ricca. Publisher: ACG.

BARBARA! I WAS ON THE VERGE OF PHONING YOU-- BECAUSE I'VE JUST ABOUT WOUND UP THE FIRST PHASE OF MY PROJECT!

DARLING--YOU LOOK TIRED! WHATEVER YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON-- IT'S BEEN A TERRIBLE STRAIN!

ALL I'VE NOTICED IS AN OCCASIONAL HEADACHE-- PROBABLY BROUGHT ON BY THE EXCITEMENT OF MY DISCOVERY! YOU SEE, I'VE HAD SOME AMAZING EXPERIENCES WITH A--WELL, I SUPPOSE YOU COULD CALL IT AN ANIMAL!

HEAVENS, DON-- YOU MAKE IT SOUND WONDERFULLY MYSTERIOUS! WHAT IS THIS THING?

YOU'LL SEE-- AS SOON AS I'VE CONCENTRATED A FEW SECONDS! THERE'S SOMETHING IN THAT BOX-- AND I'M GOING TO BRING IT OUT!

THEN--TWITCHING AND RUSTLING ON THE SHADOWED RIM--

WATCH, BARBARA-- HERE IT COMES!

OHH! IT'S A HORRID LITTE BAT!

NOW IT'S GOING TO FLY-- RIGHT OVER OUR HEADS!

NO-- DON'T! THAT THING HORRIFIES ME-- STOP IT!

LOOK! IT TURNED ABRUPTLY-- RIGHT BACK TO THE BOX!

SURE-- ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANTED? YOU TOLD ME TO STOP IT-- AND I DID!

DON-- THIS IS INCREDIBLE! YOU *COULDN'T* HAVE SPENT A WHOLE MONTH-- JUST TRAINING *THAT* MONSTROUS LITTLE CREATURE!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, BARBARA! I *CREATED* THAT BAT!

WHAT? Y-YOU MEAN IT ISN'T *REAL?*

WELL, TO BE MORE ACCURATE-- IT'S NOT *ALIVE!* IT'S MERELY A MECHANICAL DEVICE-- *A TINY ROBOT ENTIRELY CONTROLLED BY MY THOUGHT WAVES!*

THOUGHT WAVES GENERATE FAINT *ELECTRICAL IMPULSES* THAT ARE PICKED UP BY SENSITIVE *REACTOR CELLS* IN THE BAT'S MECHANISM! THERE, THE IMPULSES ARE TRANSFORMED INTO *ENERGY*-- GIVING THE BAT MOTION! THAT'S WHY, WHEN MY BRAIN CONCENTRATES ON THE REACTOR CELLS, THE BAT BECOMES *ALMOST* A LIVING THING -- AND ITS FLUTTERING TAKES ON A FANTASTIC REALISM!

FANTASTIC ISN'T THE WORD FOR IT! IF YOU *HAD* TO TEST YOUR REACTOR CELLS ON AN ARTIFICIAL ANIMAL-- WHAT EVER MADE YOU CHOOSE A *BAT?*

I *KNEW* YOU'D ASK THAT! TO BEGIN WITH -- LIVING ORGANISMS EITHER SWIM, WALK, CRAWL -- OR *FLY!*

OF THESE MOVEMENTS-- FLYING IS THE ONE MOST AFFECTED BY THINGS LIKE WIND CURRENTS AND ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE! ACCORDINGLY, A DECISIVE TEST REQUIRED A *FLYING* MECHANISM -- AND IT SO HAPPENS THAT THE ANATOMY OF A BAT IS PERFECTLY SUITED TO THE REACTOR CELL MECHANISM!

IT'S REALLY AN AMAZING DISCOVERY, DON-- BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT CAN BE CARRIED TOO FAR? WHEN THE BAT'S IN MOTION, YOU GET PALE AND TENSE-- *AS IF IT'S DRAINING YOUR ENERGY!*

BLAME *THAT* ON THE HEADACHES I MENTIONED, HONEY-- NOT BRAIN WAVES USING A MERE MILLIONTH OF A VOLT! ANYWAY, I'LL WIND THINGS UP IN TWO MORE DAYS -- AND IF YOU WANT TO USE THE SPARE ROOM-- YOU CAN GIVE ME A HAND!

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT--

DON-- DO YOU **HAVE** TO ACTIVATE THAT CREATURE AGAIN? AFTER ALL-- YOU'VE ALREADY **PROVED** YOUR THEORY!

I'M JUST MAKING A FEW FINAL OBSERVATIONS! IT'S PRETTY LATE, BARBARA-- WHY DON'T YOU GO UPSTAIRS?

A MOMENT LATER-- WATCHING THE THING WHEEL AND FLIT IN THE SHADOWED SOLITUDE--

I KEEP WONDERING IF THESE RECENT HEADACHES AREN'T DUE TO **MENTAL STRAIN!** COULD BE I'M MISTAKEN-- BUT I SEEM TO HAVE MORE AND MORE DIFFICULTY MAKING THE BAT RESPOND TO MY THOUGHT WAVES!

GO BACK TO THE TABLE! GO BACK-- AND REMAIN MOTIONLESS!

AS A MOMENTARY TREMOR RIPPLES THE GLOSSY WINGS--

STRANGE THAT IT SHOULD MOVE EVEN **SLIGHTLY-- WHEN I'M NO LONGER GIVING OUT THOUGHT IMPULSES!** BUT IT WOULD BE ABSURD TO THINK THAT THE CREATURE'S DEVELOPING SOME SORT OF INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION! THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER REASON-- SOMETHING THAT CAN BE EXPLAINED **SCIENTIFICALLY!**

SOON AFTERWARD--

DON DOESN'T KNOW I WATCHED HIM PEERING AT THE BAT-- AFTER IT ALIGHTED ON THE TABLE! MY OWN DREAD IS BAD ENOUGH-- BUT WHEN I SEE **HIM** BEGINNING TO DOUBT-- I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF GOING TO BED!

SUDDENLY-- AS THE DRIFTING MIST GATHERS INTO A SHAPE OF HORROR--

GOOD HEAVENS-- WHAT IS IT?

THOSE HIDEOUS WINGS ARE JUST LIKE THE BAT'S! BUT IT... IT'S THE GHOST OF A THING THAT DIED!

YES-- BEFORE, MY PHANTOM MIND COULD ONLY SEEK OUT VICTIMS! BUT NOW IT WILL BE DIFFERENT-- NOW I HAVE FOUND A WAY TO PREY ON THEM!

THEN--

DON! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE-- HELP!

YE GODS-- BARBARA SOUNDS SCARED WITHIN AN INCH OF HER LIFE!

HONEY-- WHAT HAPPENED?

IT WAS A GHOST-- WITH HORRIBLE BAT WINGS-- AND IT FLUTTERED OUT OF THE WINDOW JUST AS YOU REACHED THE DOOR! THE THING SPOKE TO ME, DON-- SOMETHING ABOUT PREYING ON VICTIMS!

LET'S CALM DOWN! YOU MUST HAVE DOZED OFF-- AND YOUR UNCONSCIOUS FEAR OF THE ARTIFICIAL BAT WAS EXPRESSED IN A NIGHTMARE!

I TELL YOU I SAW THE THING AND HEARD IT! I'M NOT GOING CRAZY!

I SENSED YESTERDAY THAT YOU'D GONE TOO FAR, DON-- AND NOW I'M SURE OF IT!

BARBARA, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT'LL CONVINCE YOU! I WANT YOU TO EXAMINE THE BAT CLOSELY-- SATISFYING YOURSELF THAT IT'S NOTHING BUT A MECHANICAL GADGET-- INCAPABLE OF DOING ANYTHING UNLESS IT'S DIRECTED BY A BRAIN!

A MOMENT LATER-- AT THE LIBRARY DOOR--

LISTEN! DO YOU HEAR THAT FAINT SOUND INSIDE-- LIKE FLAPPING?

SURE! IT MIGHT BE A TWIG BRUSHING THE WINDOW-- OR PAPERS ON MY DESK RUSTLED BY THE BREEZE-- BUT IT CAN'T BE WHAT YOU THINK IT IS!

SEE? THERE'S THE BAT ON THE TABLE-- *MOTIONLESS!*

YES-- IT'S MOTIONLESS *NOW!* BUT *THAT'S* NOT THE TABLE YOU LEFT IT ON!

YOU'RE RIGHT-- BUT *THAT'S* EASY TO EXPLAIN! THE BAT ONLY WEIGHS A FEW OUNCES-- A GUST OF WIND COULD EASILY HAVE SWEPT IT ACROSS THE LAB!

YOU'RE BLINDING YOURSELF TO THE TRUTH BECAUSE YOU'RE A SCIENTIST-- UNWILLING TO FACE ANY-THING YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN! PLEASE, DON-- FROM NOW ON KEEP THIS WINDOW *CLOSED!*

WHY, HONEY-- AFRAID IT MIGHT GET OUT? OKAY, I'LL GIVE IN TO YOUR WHIM-- BUT DON'T THINK I'M CONVINCED!

I'M *SURE* YOU *ARE,* DON! TONIGHT YOU DID SOMETHING VERY STRANGE-- YOU MOVED THE BAT WITH A *FORCEPS-- AS IF YOU'RE UNCONSCIOUSLY AWARE THAT THE THING'S ALIVE!*

DON-- I WON'T THINK ANY LESS OF YOU IF YOU ADMIT THE TRUTH-- *THAT YOU'RE BAFFLED AND AFRAID!* YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO *SAY* IT-- ONLY LET'S GET OUT OF HERE *TONIGHT!*

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, HONEY! WAIT FOR ME IN THE LIVING ROOM-- I HAVE SOME WORK TO DO!

AS THE MINUTES TICK PAST-- AND THE RESTLESS MOONLIGHT GLISTENS ON WINGS WITH NEITHER LIFE NOR MOTION--

I KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND-- BUT FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE-- *BE CAREFUL!* I'VE GOT A DREADFUL FEELING THAT IT'S TOO LATE-- *THAT HE WON'T LET YOU DESTROY IT!*

SHOULD I DESTROY IT-- AND ADMIT I'VE TAMPERED WITH A FORCE I SHOULD HAVE LEFT UNFATHOMED? OR SHOULD I STICK TO WHAT I TOLD BARBARA-- *THAT THE BAT'S A THING THAT MUST BE DIRECTED BY A BRAIN?*

GOOD LORD-- PERHAPS **THAT** EXPLAINS THE FATIGUE I FEEL AFTER EXPERIMENTING WITH THE BAT--THE SENSATION THAT SOMETHING'S RUNNING **COUNTER** TO MY MY THOUGHT IMPULSES! IS THERE A FORCE AT WORK HERE THAT I HAVEN'T RECKONED WITH-- **ANOTHER BRAIN?**

NO, THAT **CAN'T** BE TRUE-- BECAUSE THE BAT DOESN'T SHOW A SINGLE SIGN OF LIFE! I'LL ADMIT THAT THE EYES HAVE AN AMAZINGLY REALISTIC GLEAM -- BUT THAT'S JUST A DETAIL I HADN'T NOTICED BEFORE!

THEN-- SLASHING THE SILENCE LIKE SPLINTERED GLASS--

BARBARA! SOMETHING'S WRONG-- IN THE LIVING ROOM!

AIEEE!

TWO FORMS DART TOWARD THE LABORATORY DOOR-- ONE A MAN SHAKEN TO HIS SOUL-- AND THE OTHER--

YE GODS-- **THE BAT!** SOMETHING'S CONTROLLING IT -- GUIDING IT TO WHERE **SHE** IS!

IN THE FIRST FRANTIC INSTANT, THE SHADOWED ROOM HOLDS NOTHING BUT A WHITE-FACED GIRL -- AND THE SKITTERING BEAT OF SMALL BLACK WINGS--

BARBARA-- WHERE IS IT?

THERE--THERE! GOOD HEAVENS, CAN'T YOU SEE IT-- AGAINST THE WALL?

FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF TIME, WE SHALL BE ONE -- THE BAT AND THE BRAIN! THE BRAIN WITH ITS EVIL-- THE BAT WITH ITS FANGS-- AND **BOTH** WITH THE SOUL OF A VAMPIRE!

IN THE NEXT INSTANT--

PREY IS WHAT WE WILL SEEK HENCEFORTH -- THE BAT SUSTAINING ITSELF WITH BLOOD -- THE BRAIN FEASTING ON THE VICTIM'S TERROR!

DON -- THAT HORRIBLE THING -- IT'S FLAPPING TOWARD ME!

SUDDENLY--

ARGHHHHHH!

THWOK!

TWO PAIRS OF WINGS BEAT WILDLY AGAINST THE WALL -- ONE OF THEM SILENT AND DIMMING -- THE OTHER WHIRRING IN A WEIRD METALLIC SPASM!

AGH... AGH...

YOU WON'T HAVE TO WATCH THIS MUCH LONGER, BARBARA -- THE VAMPIRE'S STARTING TO DISAPPEAR -- AND THE BAT NO LONGER HAS ANY CONTROL!

THEN -- AS THE WRITHING FIGURE FADES OFF--

CRASH!

THE BAT'S COMPLETELY SMASHED -- BUT EVEN NOW I DREAD LOOKING AT IT!

THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF! WITH THE BRAIN DESTROYED, THE BAT BECAME A MERE INANIMATE MACHINE -- AND THERE'S WHAT IS LEFT!

DON, NOW THAT IT'S OVER -- MAYBE IT'S BEST TO FORGET ABOUT YOUR REACTOR CELLS -- AND TRY TO REMEMBER THE PHANTOM BRAIN AS A HORRIFYING ILLUSION!

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, HONEY -- BUT IT'D BE A LOT EASIER IF I HADN'T DESTROYED THAT THING THE WAY A VAMPIRE SHOULD BE DESTROYED -- WITH A SILVER BLADE!

THE END

Tyrant Lizard Kings
EMPIRE